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L. P. V. JOHNSON

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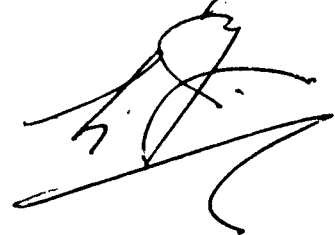
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## PREFACE

The idea of writing this manuscript first stirred in me during one of several visits to Pioneer Village, that once stood just off Highway 16 some twenty odd miles west of Edmonton. I was looking at the old steam tractors and companion threshing machines, recalling my youth. These had lately been junk, unwanted eyesores; but, just in time, they had been rescued from oblivion, and here they were, exhibited as almost priceless relics of an era now gone forever. But what of the people who had run these machines, who had been roused from their beds by the whistle in pre-dawn, who had sweated in the dust and din of the thresher, who had fired the engine and smelt the mingled fragrance of smoke and steam and hot oil? What of their struggles to exist, to thrive, to bequeath the heritage we now enjoy. Are not their recollections, their stories of the past, also relics rusting away — to be rescued just in time?

Just in time! I think of the real pioneers, the parents of my generation, with deep veneration — for they are all gone. And a strong sense of urgency sweeps over me — for I have their story and must tell it, before it is too late.

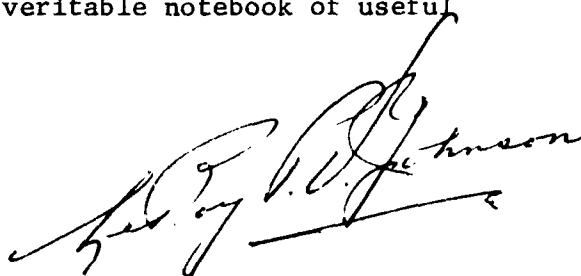
In writing of the everyday affairs of persons who have no claim to distinction nor fame nor honor, the question must arise — is it worthwhile? No writer may ignore such a question.

Thoughts of great men intrude. Giants of whom it is said: he stood alone, and we will not see, his like again. But in countering this, I think of a nobody whose stature attains from the millions who were like him, and from the millions like him that we will see again.

The present writer is reassured by his vision at Pioneer Village, by the rusting junk of his generation that had been transmuted into the priceless relics of posterity. So I write of commonplace things and people (with myself among them) freed from concern about their intrinsic worth, like a dealer in antiques whose assessments are strictly based on what value posterity places on the past.

In several of the chapters that follow, it will be noted that I have appended certain anecdotes and vignettes. This has been done for two reasons: first, that the removal of these pieces permits an unobstructed flow of the narrative; and second, that by isolating them I can give them the form and construction of complete stories, to the better satisfaction of all concerned.

Finally, I must digress from the general theme to explain what in due course will appear to be a very remarkable ability for recollection of details, particularly of very early days. I advance three good reasons for this ability: I was an intent and retentive listener to all of Dad's innumerable and detailed accounts; I also "interviewed" him as a source for school and college essays, which at every opportunity took up the pioneer theme; and I have that phenomenal memory known <sup>s</sup><sub>a</sub> photographic which, in the present need, has conjured up a veritable notebook of useful recollections.



April, 1970

## CHAPTER 1. A BIT OF ALBERTA BACKGROUND

This preliminary chapter serves to give ~~very~~ summarily an historical perspective to the homestead story, and also to outline some pertinent details of the Torrens system of land survey.

In 1867 when five eastern provinces confederated to form the Canadian nation, the territory which is now Alberta was a part of Rupert's Land, which had been a possession of the Hudson's Bay Company since 1670. And it was still Indian country. Blackfeet and Crees roamed the prairies and parklands. They camped, even then, on the sites that were to become Calgary and Edmonton, and hunted buffalo and antelope across a virgin vastness of future farmland. Oases of civilization in this wilderness were to be found only at the Company's trading post at Fort Edmonton, and at a sparse scattering of smaller posts and even smaller Christian missions. All were Indian orientated, whether for commercial or spiritual ends.

Thus, the old ways of the Indian still held — but precariously, for the floodgate was opening to the eastern wave. In 1870 Canada took over Rupert's Land and called it the North West Territories. Four years later the Royal North West Mounted Police came to Alberta, to police the plains and administer Indian policies. They built among others, forts at MacLeod and Calgary. Now cattle in their thousands began to arrive from Montana to stock the ranges around Cypress Hills and in the Porcupine Hills and the Bow River Valley.

\* \* \*

At this point in time it would be well to interpose an interlude on buffalo and Indians. Within the decade of 1870-80 the buffalo herds were reduced from super-abundance almost to extinction. The phenomenon was largely inexplicable. Some said that the buffalo were carried off by an epidemic, brought in by the cattle; others believed that the main cause



was the stepped-up wholesale slaughter to provide hides, which were in great demand by white traders at Fort Benton, across the border. Whatever the reason, the Indians were restless, for their economy had been buffalo-based. The Government, however, was Johnny-on-the spot, with its treaties. Treaty No. 6, signed at Forts Carlton and Pitt in 1876 was an instrument whereby the tribes north of the Red Deer River, Crees, Assiniboines, Iroquois and Chipewyans, gave up the freedom of their hunting grounds for confinement to reservations. In the next year Treaty No. 7, signed at Blackfoot Crossing, dealt similarly with southern tribes, the Blackfeet, Bloods, Piegans, Sarcees and Stoneys. Thus, it came about that the Indians relinquished their lands to the settlers — and had no need at all for the buffalo.

\* \* \*

The first step in settlement of the prairies had been made in 1871 with organization of the Dominion Lands office under Surveyor-General J. S. Dennis. Starting from the Latitude 49 North (International Boundary) as the First Base Line, successive parallel lines were marked-off northward at six-mile intervals. These gave the Township lines. Starting from the Principal Meridian (between 97 and 98 degrees of Longitude West) just west of Winnipeg, parallel lines were marked-off successsively westward, again at six-mile intervals. These gave the Ranges. A Second Meridian was surveyed at Longitude 102 degrees West, a Third at 106, a Fourth at 110 and a Fifth at 115 degrees West.

Now it was possible to identify a given 6 x 6 - mile square of prairie grassland as, say, Township 14, Range 28 West of the Fourth Meridian.

This was the general survey. It was followed by a detailed survey, made within the 6 x 6-mile square, which was called a Township. The Township was divided into 36 Sections of one square mile (640 acres) each. These

Sections were numbered starting with No. 1 in the S.E. corner, with Nos. 2 to 6 in a westward row, coming back in an eastward row so that No. 12 was over No. 1, and so on so No. 36 was in the N.E. corner of the Township. Road allowances 66 feet (one chain) wide were surveyed at one-mile intervals north and south and two mile intervals east and west. Finally the four Quarters of each Section were marked by monuments at at least two corners so a homesteader was always able to find the boundaries of his 160 acres. The homesteader called these marks "mounds". Each consisted of a deeply-driven iron rod, marked for easy finding by heaps of dirt from four holes.

The homestead where the author was born was legally described in the Land Titles Office as S.E. 1/4, Section 2, Tp. 14, R. 28, W of 4th M.

There were bodies rather more important than the settler who had an interest in the Sections surveyed in these prairie Townships. Sections 8 and 26 belonged to the Hudson's Bay Company. All of the odd-numbered sections were reserved for the Canadian Pacific Railway, except Nos. 11 and 29 which were "School Sections". The latter were held in trust by the Dominion for the support of provincial education.

\* \* \*

May, 1882, brought internal boundary changes to the North West Territories in that they were divided into four districts for electoral and postal purposes. These were Alberta, Athabaska, Assiniboia and Saskatchewan. Compared roughly to the present Province, territorial Alberta consisted only of the area south of Lac La Biche. (A western part of Athabaska formed the northern remainder of the Province). Alberta was named after the second daughter of Queen Victoria, Princess Louise Alberta, consort of the Marquis of Lorne, then Governor General of Canada. The Vice-Regal party was at the time visiting the Territories, and were

facinated by Calgary, Bow River, Banff — and Lake Louise, of obvious relation to the Royal Princess.

\* \* \*

The tracks of the Canadian Pacific Railway crossed the Saskatchewan River at Medicine Hat on June 14, 1883, and reached Calgary, 186 miles northwest, on August 10. Now, the floodgates were open indeed.

The first homestead patent in the Territories was issued to Thomas McKay of Prince Albert in 1883. This was the first drop in the trickle, the torrent and the flood to follow. As the head of steel crept westward, the C.P.R. Company gave high priority to the building of Colonist coaches, hopefully to accommodate the flood of settlers stemming from its Land Department's all-out advertising campaign. And the settlers came, in their hundreds, their thousands. They rode to the end of steel, there detraining to have early choices among nearby homesteads.

But not all came by rail. Some came by bull-train from Montana and some, the Mormons, by covered wagon from Utah. After the Northwest Rebellion of 1885, many settlers chose to bypass Saskatchewan and to settle in Alberta, considered to be safer from the Indians.

New impetus, if that were needed, was given by the C.P.R. in 1892 when the Company offered land for sale in their odd-numbered sections at prices from \$3 to \$15 per acre.

Settlers from Britain, U.S.A. and Ontario settled as individuals; but because of linguistic, religious and cultural considerations, those from Quebec and continental Europe tended to flock to communities made-up of their fellow countrymen. Thus, French Canadians settled an area between

St. Albert and Morinville; German Baptists from Russia settled at Fort Saskatchewan, Rabbit Hills, Leduc and Wetaskiwin; Austrians and Germans took up land around Stony Plain; Scandinavian Lutherans founded communities around Camrose and Wetaskiwin; and Russians, Ukrainians, Galicians and Bukowinians settled a large fertile area stretching from Fort Saskatchewan to Vermilion.

The only British colony in Alberta was at Lloydminster, on the Saskatchewan border, where nearly 2,000 Barr Colonists successfully mixed dirt farming with afternoon tea and riding to hounds in pink coats.

This account of settlement has brought us to the turn of the century, and thus to the time of my story.

## CHAPTER 2. EXCURSION WEST

I can write the events of this chapter almost as though I had been there to see, because both Mother and Dad were noted for reminiscence — especially Dad who could give flashes of vivid description and convincing dialogue.

Mother was born on the family farm near Bolmsö, a village on an island in Lake Bolmen, Smöland, Sweden. She and her brother Peter and half-sister Anna emmigrated to the U.S.A. in 1893. By chance they settled in Geneseo, Illinois. And there Mother met Dad.

Dad, a native of Geneseo, was second generation Swedish. His father, Lars Johnson, a thrice-married Swedish adventurer and strongman, had come to his Geneseo farm via England and Chicago. Dad's mother, daughter of a Chicago publisher, died of consumption within weeks of his birth.

As a gay-ninties teenager Dad spent a couple of years in Colorado, first at Nywat, where his sister Anna's husband was railway section foreman, later in the silver mines at Georgetown. In quieter moments he performed, by on-the-job training, such barbering as the miners required. In wilder moments he had many hair-raising escapades, which he told with all the spice and spirit of the frontier raconteur.

Dad returned to Geneseo, became a tenant corn-belt farmer, and in 1898 married my mother.

\* \* \*

Marriage rather domesticated Dad. Nevertheless, the winter of 1902-03 brought restlessness. The Moline papers, and even the Geneseo Republic carried glowing advertisements of free land to be had in the North West Territories of Canada. There were full-page advertisements on behalf of the Saskatchewan Valley Land Company, a U.S. concern that had bought thousands

of odd-numbered Sections from the C.P.R., and somewhat smaller but no less attractive ones by the C.P.R. itself. The Railway offered Homeseekers Excursions from St. Paul, just a cent-a-mile and good for two months. These had a double appeal to Dad: first, a farm of his own; second, adventure in the Great Plains country. He said afterwards that he "got tired of picking corn on rented land that he could never afford to buy".

So in June 1903, with the corn planted in chick-rows and already cross-cultivated, he and Frank Wetterhall took the train to St. Paul. There they got Canadian Land Seeker's Certificates and took the Soo-Pacific (a C.P.R. subsidiary) to North Portal, on the "line", and continued on to Moose Jaw and Regina by C.P.R.

At Regina they visited the Land Office. The clerk opened a big "township" book showing land still available in the district. Dad and Frank chose a township and received a printed form, about 6 inches square, in which the quarter sections were marked ~~O~~ (open) or X (taken). They also got various booklets and a handbook of regulations.

Their method of land seeking was to advance by rail, stopping at one of a sequence of towns (or train-stop sidings). At each of these they would hire a horse and buggy at the livery stable, or other ~~p~~urveyor of transport. Then they drove across the open grasslands, identifying townships from surveyor's maps and mounds, evaluating the soil by the height of the grass it grew and by samples provided by gopher and badger excavations.

Not impressed by the dry, short-grass area around Regina and Moose Jaw, they made their way north with many halts into Saskatchewan Territory as far as Prince Albert. There was some good land and, back tracking, they had a second look at two or three locations.

Somewhere along the way they bought bed rolls. This Territorial

variety consisted of a tarp (6 x 14 feet), thin mattress, blanket and long narrow pillow. After rolling (with sundry clothing enclosed, to the relief of the suit case) it was secured by two leather straps. They also acquired a large square of canvas which, draped over a buggy or ridgepole, served as a tent.

Forsaking Saskatchewan, they crossed the Assiniboia - Alberta border a few miles east of Medicine Hat. (This border was a few miles west of the present Alberta - Saskatchewan boundary). They stopped a day at "The Hat" before going on to Calgary. There they put up for two or three days at Immigration Hall, a high frame building, painted blue. They spent many hours at the Land Office, perusing books on homesteads available. Influenced no doubt by the fact that one of Dad's relatives (rather remote), John Wilford, had homesteaded at Stavely, they bought tickets to that town, 73 miles south on the Macleod branch line.

\* \* \*

Dad and Frank had an early supper in the C.P.R. Station in order to catch the MacLeod train at six o'clock. Enroute their eyes strayed always to the westward. The foothills and backdrop of distant mountains was a welcome relief from the ever-featureless rim of the Saskatchewan horizon. De Winton, Midnapore, Aldersyde, Okotoks, High River, Cayley, Nanton, Parkland — each a stop on the way. Arriving at Stavely's boxcar-on-a-siding station about nine, they went at once to the livery stable to arrange for next-morning's transport — and, as it happened, to spend the night there.

Dad liked to describe his first day in and around Stavely. He and Frank got a team and democrat at the livery stable and, having "slept with the horses", made an early start. They started west. The early morning sun

touched the topmost peaks of the Livingstone Range and the snowy summits, fifty-odd miles away, flushed pink-gold. Directly ahead was a cleft in the blue mountain wall, known locally as The Gap. Immediately to the south rose a vertically-sided, gable-topped peak which Dad named Elevator Mountain on the spot. To the north was a high sloping lump, and this he named Haystack Mountain.

Some three or four miles out of town the level plain gave way to slightly rolling hills. Ahead were the smoothly humped forms of the Porcupine Hills, foothills tawny against the blue of the mountain backdrop and now, in June, touched with green. Soon they descended into Pine Coulee. They "watered" the horses at a small lake.

"What do you think?" asked Frank.

All morning they had seen only short grass prairie and gravelly knolls. Even the coulee bottom showed little in the way of lush grass, and the rim of the lake showed a touch of alkali.

"Ranch country", said Dad with finality.

They were back in Stavely for lunch. A fellow diner pointed out that the previous year had been the "wettest" on record, and in the previous month there had been over two feet of snow. Dad wondered why they had not seen better grass.

\* \* \*

In the afternoon they headed east, eastward into a flat infinity of space. But they came upon small lakes and sloughs, and the grass was taller. A few miles southeast of town they crossed a coulee and found a lake of some twenty acres expanse, fed by a bubbling spring at its western end. Now the grass was taller still. And there were many "open" quarters in even-numbered Sections, homesteads to be had for the asking. So they



decided to explore the vicinity, searching for the area that supported the tallest grass.

Less than a mile north of the spring they came to a place where the grass brushed the hubs of the democrat. Here was land that could respond to adequate moisture, a deep top-soil, rich and black.

Dad dismounted and having lifted the sod, turned-up a deep spadeful of soil, and was at once on his knees — his hands in the dirt.

He turned to Frank and said, "This is it!"

And Frank nodded.

They found surveyor's mounds. They were at the junction of two road allowances. The one running east and west separated Townships 13 and 14. The other, north and south separated Sections 35 and 36 in Township 13 and Sections 1 and 2 in Township 14. Dad had spaded S.E. 1/4 *of* "open" Section 2. Now they moved westward to the S.W. 1/4. It, too, was a superlative piece of ground.

"You take the southwest quarter", said Frank. "You have a family and it's closer to town".

They went back to Staveland and filed on the homesteads. It had been a big day and deserved a bed in the hotel that night.

After spending a day at the Wilfords, they were on their way back to Illinois. There their families — and Dad's last corn crop — were waiting.

\* \* \*

A certain skill in story telling, perhaps not unrelated to exaggeration and added colouring, seems to have run in the Johnson family, and two, Dad and his sister Anna (from Colorado) must certainly be classed as raconteurs. Dad had an apparently endless repertoire (which may be a

a little suspect) and could rise to any occasion with "That reminds me of the time that.....". His ghost stories were hair-raising and operated against sleeping in the dark, his descriptions of the misadventures of rural Illinoisians of the Gay Nineties were lively, hilarious and full of quotes in Swedish and German dialects, and his own exploits had elements of danger, daring and suspense.

The two stories, or anecdotes, to be appended to this early chapter both deal with my antecedents.

The first, going back to the 1840's has to do with my paternal grandfather. Lars Johnson was big handsome man, overflowing with love of life and adventure. Dad liked best to describe his feats of strength (lifting 400 - pound barrels) and of maintaining law and order on the frontier by his fearsome presence. Aunt Anna, an incurable romantic, doted on the bit of history that follows.

#### ALMOST ROYALTY

Lars Johnson, as a lad, obtained a job as an under-gardener on the estate of a Swedish noble family who were related, closely or remotely, to the Bernadottes. There was a young daughter in the family (practically a princess, Dad said) who fell in love with Lars. The attraction was mutual, and it grew into a passion not to be denied. The pair eloped.

They were married in England, and in due course came to America, to Lincoln's America — Illinois.

A boy and a girl were born to my Grandfather and the Princess and they lived happily on the frontier. Until one day, when cholera struck.

The dread disease left Grandfather a childless widower.

Years later Grandfather married my Grandmother, a fine lady (Christine), daughter of the publisher of a Chicago Swedish newspaper.

Aunt Anna used to speculate on our relationship to Swedish royalty.

"If the Princess hadn't died..." she would begin only to be halted by the intricacies of the line of descent.

"Anyway", she would continue triumphantly, "We had a half-brother and a half-sister who were royalty!"

\* \* \*

The second story chosen for reproduction here (in much contracted form) is one told of an uncle by both Dad and Aunt Anna. And since their independent accounts agreed quite closely in substance, it may be taken as substantially true. Being one generation farther removed, I call it:

#### MY GREAT UNCLE'S WEDDING

First, something in general about my Great Uncle. He was a rich, domineering show-off who loved to startle people by word or action or both. In the late '80s he decided to pay an extended visit to his native Sweden. There was a farewell dinner and the presentation of a gold-headed cane. But he was back in Geneseo a few weeks later, with the explanation that he had gone to the old family farm, found his brother to be obnoxious, slept overnight in a haystack and commenced the return journey next day. One day in Geneseo his spirited horses acted-up and cramped the wheels as he was entering his carriage. Actually, he was in no danger; but seeing that he had the attention of bystanders he shouted, "Nu gikk banet!" (Now the leg went!)

to cause some to rush out at great personal risk to throttle the team.

Our story opens in the Gay Nineties with MGU's proposal of marriage to a young belle of the town. This was in due course accepted and the happy man decided to build a new house for the bride. There ensued a race to finish the house before the nuptial date, and this the carpenters almost won. But not quite, the upstairs had not been floored — there were only scattered boards on the joists.

The wedding was at the Swedish Lutheran<sup>a</sup> church followed by high jinks at the new house. Wedding gifts glittered in the entrance hall and overflowed onto parlor tables which, with those of the dining room, groaned under the weight of the wedding feast. At last the guests rumbled their napkins and drew back from the board. There was a signal to MGU.

He ordered the servants (hired for the day) to clear the rooms for dancing, and to remove the gifts to the upstairs bedrooms. He tinkled a bell for attention and cried out.

"Nu skall vi ha kallas!"

(Now we shall make merry!).

The music struck up and the groom and bride led off the dancing.

A little later MGU, unnoticed, extricated his bride from the dancing throng and led her up the stairs.

"To see our presents", he whispered.

Time passed. The dancing grew livelier, the din of voices louder.

Then the parlor ceiling exploded in a splintering crash. Somehow, upstairs, MGU had unwarily stepped between the scattered boards to come crashing through the light ceiling boards. Now he hung dangling over his guests, caught at the armpits.

And there was not a stitch of clothing upon him!

Respecting the above, I can only plead that it by no means typifies my antecedents — MGU was unique!

### CHAPTER 3. SOUTHWEST OF SECTION TWO: FIRST YEAR

Dad returned to Geneseo a Western Canadian enthusiast — which was a feeling and a faith that he never lost. His accounts of Alberta were lively and glowing — and no doubt colorful to the point of being a bit "tall". In any case, as he prepared for his own ~~em~~igration he influenced others. Within a year or two many of his close friends and relatives found their way to the Stavely district. There were my uncle Peter Magnus Johnson (Mother's brother), Charles Anderson, William Enquist, Rance Miller and family, Mr. and Mrs. "Thod" Miller, Clarence and Nettie Davis, Maud Miller.

Dad and Frank Wetterhall "shipped-up" in late March, 1904. They loaded a boxcar with duty-free "settlers' effects", nearly all of which belonged to Dad. There were four horses (with harness), one cow, one dog (Linc), a crate of ~~Barred-Rock~~ chickens, one walking plow, a one-bottom (Good Enough) sulky plow, a saddle, a wooden pump in several sections, block and tackle, a wire stretcher and some rolls of barbed wire, one corn cultivator, one surrey (with top, but no fringe), leather mud guards and brass side lamps, two water barrels (one packed with dishes, pots, pans, the stereoscope, the spice cabinet, the White House Cook Book, etc.), one wagon, a "slip" scraper, one mower, one blower forge, an anvil, one very large chest of tools, a combination desk and bookcase, a kitchen range (with canned goods in oven), a rocking chair, one bedstead (with spring and mattress), a wheelbarrow, a tent, some lumber (and nails), nosebags and water pails (for the horses), a quantity of oats and hay (baled), and some cracked corn (chicken feed).

In order to get all of these "effects" into the car, everything had to be dismantled and then so packed that every inch of space was used. At the very last they put in a small table, a crokinole board, a

lantern, some tin dishes, a small two-wick kerosene stove, a 12-gauge shot gun, a Winchester 45 repeater and the bed rolls. And, last of all, a chamber pot.

Dad was officially permitted to travel with the boxcar, and he was able to get a pass for Frank. But my Uncle Pete was a stowaway, and spent many hours hidden in the hay to avoid detection during periodic inspections by railway officials. However, he appeared before immigration officials at the line and entered Canada in a proper manner.

Dad and his companions "shipped-up" under very cosy conditions. There was enough animal life to keep the car warm, there were fresh eggs, fresh milk, canned goods; and other groceries, especially bread and bacon, to be had at various stopping points. Indeed, with the horses nosing their hay, the cow chewing her cud, the chickens clucking, the aroma of bacon and eggs and coffee — the boxcar was an abode of total contentment.

\* \* \*

It had been arranged for mother to follow in about three weeks by passenger train. Dad chose that he should endure the hardships of slow freighting, leaving Mother the luxuries of fast express.

As it turned out, Dad had all of the luxuries and Mother the hardships.

She boarded the train in mid-April with the Johnson offspring and 300 pounds of allowable free baggage. The trip was hardly a holiday outing. She had Richard, nearly six, and Howard, seventeen months to care for; and at St. Paul, where they picked-up the C.P.R. colonist car, she had to share

her "section" with a sniffing mother and train-sick child (Cecilia, as she remembered).

By day, the Colonist section consisted of facing double seats in black leatherette. At night it was transformed into a double bed by sliding the seats forward to bridge the space formerly for the feet. From overhead a large panel could be pulled down to provide a shelf which became an upper berth of dimensions similar to those of the lower.

The sleeping arrangements in Mother's section were arrived at on a trial-and-error basis, ending with Mother and Howard on the shelf. Richard's reaction to sleeping with Cecilia and her mother are unknown.

The car provided toilets and lavatories with basins, hot and cold water, soap and towels, segregated as to sex. The car also had an iced drinking water dispenser and a railway-version kitchen range. The latter was provided with fuel and was the common facility for the cooking needs, first come first served, of all the passengers.

The car was crowded, largely by women and children, and passengers contended for space in toilets and around the range. All in all Mother's milieu was a far cry from the solid comfort of Dad's boxcar.

The train arrived at a point near North Portal, N.D., the boundary town, to find that the Souris River had overflowed and washed out the track bed. There Mother spent two weeks. Her one diversion was to walk along the siding on fine days, stopping to watch the men play horseshoes, or running to keep Richard out of the mud.

Finally, on May 4, 1905, Mother and the two boys arrived at Stavelly.

\* \* \*

Mother judged her Alberta surroundings with a scale of values somewhat different from Dad's. His were primarily the economic criteria of the practical farmer — the soil, the crops that could be grown, the physical farmstead that could be built, the community that could be created. Hers centered on the house, the garden, the chickens, such beauty as could be found or created — and of course the children.

Her advent was propitious. It was May of an early spring, there was a trill of water in the distant coulee, the whole countryside was one vast expanse of green sward (there had been a great prairie fire the year before), prairie crocus (Anemone wolfgangiana) bloomed in long mauve-blue banks on southern slopes, and the throaty notes of the meadowlark gave the final thrill to the newcomer.

"It was beautiful!"

Dad and Uncle Pete had been on the site for a month and the improvements were elequent of their industry. There was the tent with a wooden floor and the kitchen range, whose pipe poked through a metal ring in the canvas. There was a wall-less slab-roofed shed (weighted with sods) for the livestock. There was a pen and shelter for the chickens. There was a barrel of water from the spring, covered with a hoop-secured square of canvas and resting on its stoneboat conveyance. A double fireguard had been plowed on all sides of the site, and inside of this protective work, two strands of barbed wire had been strung on willow posts. Within this temporary fence, Mother could see the familiar surrey and the forge and farm implements, and Linc and the horses and cow. And Mother was at home with it all.



In the low ground south east of the site, Uncle Pete had started to dig a well. The fence around the yard had been intended southward to enclose about 15 acres, including a slough which gave a watered pasture for the stock. And west of the pasture Dad had started the breaking that would give us our first crop.

The first few days were busy ones for mother. She unpacked her baggage which was mainly clothing and bedding, but also included her Singer sewing machine, framed pictures, and the reflector lamp. Her first undertaking after setting up the housekeeping was to set the brooding hens -- one on turkey eggs.

Life on the homestead was thrilling to Mother and the boys. Considering the difficulties experienced by many other homestead wives, it was undoubtedly a great advantage that Mother had so happy a start. She seems to have built-up quickly a healthy credit balance that succeeding debits could never erase.

But some drawbacks were early noted. The first was the lack of fuel, and in this six-year-old Richard shared. It was his job to take the wheelbarrow and go looking for cow chips. These were the dried splatters from range cattle that had but recently foraged our area. When he found an extra big one, he called it a buffalo chip. Mother encouraged this belief, and the chip box was kept full of dry fuel against the rainy days.

When Mother imposed observance of the sabbath, Dad used the occasion to take the family and Frank Wetterhall on a Sunday picnic to Willow Creek, a pretty and fair-sized stream a few miles west of Pine Coulee in the near foothills. They went by wagon and returned sitting high over a wagon box

filled with dead poplar wood and slender willow trunks for posts. The poplar was used, rather sparingly, to kindle the more abundant cow chips.

Dad concentrated on plowing. Uncle Pete was by nature a putterer, a pee<sup>r</sup>less handyman, and he concentrated on small carpentry and digging the well.

The breaking went on apace, using the Good Enough sulky plough and a three-horse hitch, and by mid-May there was a black patch of about 20 acres. Dad then "borrowed" a disc harrow from the premises of the next-door absentee homesteader (Philip Lavergne of N.W. 1/4 Section 2, as he knew from Land Office records). After discing the breaking he sowed five acres of wheat with a "Cyclone" seeder. This was a broadcast contraption with a neckband-supported seedbag that rested on the chest, and from which the seed dribbled onto channeled blades and whirled out by vigorous cranking.

By the time he had got thus far with the sowing, his friend from Geneseo, Charlie Anderson had arrived — with a grain drill. This he borrowed and completed the sowing, about eight acres each of wheat and oats. In return he helped Charlie with breaking, on N.E. 1/4, Section 2.

The wheat variety sown was "Red Fife", but the oat variety is unknown.

Thus, by the end of May the homestead on S.W. 1/4, Section 2 was a farm in fact.

\* \* \*

In June the slough, which earlier had been filled by run-off from melting snow, dried sufficiently so that its grass borders could be plowed. As soon as Frank Wetterhall had completed his breaking, Dad recovered his team and the 14-inch Good Enough and, with a newly-sharpened rolling coulter,

went to work on the slough. And thus the sod house began.

At first he had considered using the sods from the fireguard, but they broke into short pieces. On the other hand, the sods from the slough were long continuous slices. These were accurately ~~sawn~~ into 14 x 30 inch "bricks" and transported to the site.

I can vouch personal evidence respecting the sod house for I knew it at first hand a few years later, when it was used as a chicken house. It was about 8 x 12 feet, inside measurement, with a small window on the south and a door to the east. At the base the six foot walls were very thick, about a yard, tapering on the outside to the width of a 14 inch sod at the top. The vertical inside walls were hewn smooth and plastered with lake mud, which had dried almost white — except a strip like a baseboard that mother had tinged with her washing bluing (Mrs. Stewart's). The ceiling, which gave a headroom of about seven feet at the center, was of alternating smooth slabs and ~~pine~~ poles sloping gently from the heavy center ridge pole. The roof itself was "shingled" with sods which grew a fair stand of grass.

In my enthusiasm for the sod house (we never called it "shack") I failed to mention the prior completion of the well, for which Uncle Pete should get main credit. When the dirt could no longer be thrown out, a tripod of poles was built over the well-head and a rope and pulley and bucket rigged up to bring the diggings to the top. When Dad was otherwise occupied Mother would pull-up and dump the dirt. The hole, about four feet square, was curbed as it deepened. The wooden curbing prevented a cave-in and supported the ladder necessary for descent and ascent. After digging through a layer of blue clay, water was struck at about 50 feet.

Uncle Pete was, of course, looking for a homestead of his own. He had brought nothing from St. Paul, where he had been working in a sash and door factory, except his personal baggage, some tools and a considerable amount of money. During the summer he bought a team and buggy and extended his explorations rather far afield. He filed on a place about 20 miles east in anticipation of a new railway line (Aldersyde to Kipp), which was to materialize in 1911. Champion then became his home town.

Dad continued with the breaking as time and soil moisture would permit. When the ground was dry it was next to impossible to do a good job. There were many stones near the surface, sometimes large boulders, and the stonepiles grew.

Mother had a garden, and she had planted potatoes directly under every second furrow slice as Dad turned the sod with the walking plow.

There were fair rains in June and July and, with residual moisture from the previous year, the growth, of everything, was phenonemal.

\* \* \*

Regulations of the Homestead Act required that, over a three-year period, a homesteader reside on his quarter section for six months of each year, cultivate at least 30 acres, and build a house worth at least \$300. Dad met all of these requirements in the first eight or nine months, except of course residence requirements in succeeding years.

The family used the tent rather than the sod house during the summer, and there was general agreement that a frame house should be built "before the snow flies"

There was an Atlas (later Beaver) Lumber Yard in Stavely that supplied all our needs from tar paper to wainscotting. Dad and Frank joined forces to build the outer frames of a shack, for Frank, and a two-storey house, for us.

Our two-storey was the absolute minimum of its class: one room down, one room up. It was built on a "dry" stone foundation over a cellar; the later excavated by pick, spade, shovel and slip scraper. It's floor dimensions were 16 x 20. There were sliding sash windows on the south, west and north downstairs, with the door on the east. Upstairs there were windows on the south and north gables.

The family moved into the sod house in late September and into the new house in time for Christmas.

There were three main provisions toward winter warmth. All outer walls were covered with tar paper held in place with laths, the lower walls were "banked" with sods up to the windows, and we got a new heater. The latter I remember well — for its ornate top which could be swung aside, for its polished fender for one's feet, and most of all for the icinglass windows in its cast iron scrollwork door.

Other provisions may be mentioned: a load of poplar wood from the "Hills", a load of coal (self serve) from a nearby mine, and two buffalo robes.

Fortunately the winter came late (apart from a foot of snow in October) and there was no intense cold until February (1905), when the temperature dropped to 40 below zero.

Again enthusiasm for a house has carried me ahead of the story.

Dad had broken another 20 acres after spring sowing, and this went into winter wheat in September. The variety was Alberta Red, a re-christening of the American variety Nebraska Red.

And many other things had happened. The wheat and oats had been cut and stacked, and threshed with a horse-power separator of the straw-carrier type. About half of the oat sheaves were saved for green feed to supplement the stack of "prairie wool" hay. A frame of posts and woven wire had been built to enclose the open sides of the slab-roofed shed. The whole structure was covered with wheat straw (oat straw was used for feed) so that it looked like a straw pile. The four horses and two cows (one addition) were cosy for the winter. So, too, were the chickens — in the sod house.

\* \* \*

The changes wrought on Southwest of Section Two from April to December 1904 bordered on the miraculous. To Dad they added-up to his most spectacular achievement. For years to come he could, and did, recount those first-year accomplishments with zestful pride. Mother liked to recall homey details that Dad left out, like Christmas dinner. Uncle Pete came from his lonely homestead (and did some "finishing" on the house). There was Frank, of course, and Phil Lavergne (who, it turned out, had been in jail).

Although the first year was before my time, I have lived it vicariously as personal experience. Succeeding events were blurred as to time and detail, but never those of the first year. I have played crokinole in the boxcar, have done all the plowing and digging and building on the homestead, have thrilled to the miracle of creation — as though I were Mother and Dad rolled into one!

#### CHAPTER 4. HOMESTEAD BOYHOOD

I was born in the upstairs room on Friday July 28, 1905 (the day after Dad's thirty-third birthday). This event took place in the North West Territories -- so I am older than the Province of Alberta by 35 days, a seniority of which I am justly proud.

Other authenticated events of that year were the fencing of the entire homestead with three strands of barbed wire, the building of a shingle-roofed barn with vertical slab walls and the buying of a McCormick binder. Last year's breaking (other than that in winter wheat) was backset and put to spring wheat and oats. There was also a few acres of new spring breaking which were sown to flax. And pigs were added to the livestock population.

The matter of a school and a church for our community was not neglected by my parents. Dad took his turn in bringing the Swedish Lutheran pastor, Rev. L. J. Fihn, from Claresholm to hold services in district homes including our own. (I was baptized by this reverend gentleman on September 17, 1905). A schoolhouse was built on N.W. 1/4, Sect. 31, Township 13, three miles from our place. Dad had the honor of giving the name, Mountain Peak, to the school, which carried also the official appendage of School District No. 1856.

The district church never materialized, through a dearth of Swedish Lutherans, and our family became adherents of the Methodist Church in Stavely.

In 1905 very heavy rains in June were followed by drought, and the crops (except the winter wheat) were rather poorer than in 1904. Dad worked that fall as a tankee (driver of a wagon-mounted water tank) for a large steam threshing outfit. He had this job for several successive years.

The winter of 1905-06 was long and cold; but it was the following one that is remembered because of the herds of starving range cattle that came down from the hills, trying to forage on the "flats". There had been intense cold with heavy snowfall from December to February. Then came a Chinook thaw followed by more cold, which produced a hard crust over the snow. Cows, unlike horses, cannot "paw away" the snow and they were already thin when the crust formed. After that they were starving. Dad and Mother described the great herds of "wild cattle" that made bloody tracks to our fences, their legs lacerated by the crust, knife-like when broken. Many of them died there.

Two years later there were more starving cattle to die at our gates. This spectacle of starving bawling, bleeding cattle in 1909 (perhaps March) is my earliest remembrance — indistinct, except for blood on trampled snow.

I often wonder if the big beef barons who made their fortunes from unprovisioned cattle had qualms of conscience over such awful sufferings. To be as fair as possible about this, I will say that the range cattle came through most winters in good condition.

Perhaps because of this childhood experience I am very sensitive to the suffering of animals. I wonder what can be said in defense of the cruelty of northern traplines.

Dad always said that 1908 was climatically a perfect year. An early spring after a mild, almost snowless winter, a wet summer for growing, a hot August for ripening and a long dry fall for harvesting. But the year was remembered for thing<sup>s</sup> not of the weather.

Mabel Gertrude was born on April 14, and we all rejoiced. Frank Wetterhall, nearest neighbor and oldest friend, died in his homestead shack before his wheat was cut.



Frank, who "hadn't a selfish bone in his body", took homestead rigors hopefully as they came — a true frontiersman. During the summer he became ill, with constant pain in the lower abdomen and periodic nausea. He resorted to patent medicines and seemed to get relief from Ginn Pills, which turned his urine green (I afterward found some of the boxes). One day the pain abated but a day or two later he was in the throes of unbearable agony. Dad found him in bed gripping the 2 x 4 studs of the wall. A doctor was called and inflammation of the bowels diagnosed. He died within days.

Dad told of the arrival of the undertaker who opened the door and shouted "Hello! Anybody home". Apparently he expected a reaction — if the man were not really dead.

Frank's body was embalmed and sent to Geneseo for burial.

Dad took off Frank's crop, paid the local bills and sent the balance to his sister Anna (who had married Dad's half-brother). The homestead, still largely in grass, was part of Frank's estate. It was first rented to a man named Williams, and later sold to S. T. Marshall, a fine Ontario neighbor on N.E. 1/4, Section 34.

\* \* \*

I come now to the point in time when this story may be told from my own recollections. And I am reminded of one of Swift's resolutions: "not to talk much, nor of myself". This should be followed in every case — except that of autobiography.

My first vivid memory (discounting the starving cattle as being rather dimly recalled) is of a picnic at Willow Creek in the summer of 1909, when I was four. After lunch I took up a stick and began to explore my

immediate surroundings, under Mother's watchful eyes. Upturning an ancient cow chip, I disturbed a hornets' nest. I ran screaming to Mother pursued by the angry yellow jackets that stung me again and again. Mother took me to the creek and plastered my bare legs and arms and face with silty mud. I think this latter remedial measure was as surprising as the pain of the multiple stings. In any case I remember my woeful state, and the mixed commiseration and levity of my fellow picnics.

The first recollection that can be dated, although later, is hardly more than an impression: the death of King Edward VII on May 6, 1910.

It was perhaps during the same summer that I became conscious of my homestead surroundings. I remember the house (its tarpaper outer walls now covered with grooved siding), the sod house (inherited by chickens), the slab-sided barn (now a cowshed), a new horse barn, the wooden pump and wooden trough, the pasture (the N.E. forty, excluding the buildings, garden, barn-yard, etc. — the other 120 acres being cultivated), and the blacksmith shop. And the horses — that I dreamed of driving, hitched four-abreast to the plow or binder.

Dad had bought N.E. 1/4, Section 10 (a mile north) from Ralph Davis, assisted by a mortgage. The Davis shack was moved home to become our blacksmith shop.

"A good snow in June and no rain until August" is the way Dad characterized the summer of 1910. It was our dryest year so far.

One of the most cherished of my early memories is dated — June 22, 1911, Coronation Day. Mother wore a fawn coat, which she called a "duster"; Dad wore a black bowler, which he called his "cady" hat. It was a warm, golden morning. We drove to Staveland in our stately surrey, its brass side lamps gleaming — as were the brass balls on the hames of the harness. I remember the wheel ruts of the trail that went diagonally toward town across

unfenced land. I recall the dust from the buggy ahead, which had yellow wheels. The Fair Ground was bright with flags and bunting. There was a brass band and a red motor car (called a "runabout"). There were sporting events and speeches. I walked about with my little sister, Mabel — holding her hand. And I came home with a small Union Jack and a picture of King George V and Queen Mary.

\* \* \*

I started school at Mountain Peak in September 1911. Richard drove the single horse (Old Jim) and buggy with Howard and me as passengers. We had lunch pails (mine a tapering yellow one, originally for lard) and an oat sheaf in the boot for the horse. I wore a sailor suit and my long blond hair was in ringlets. As if these were not bad enough, I spoke with a very distinct Swedish accent.

That my advent to Mountain Peak was not fraught with small disasters was due in part to Richard's protection and in part to my being big and strong for my age.

My first teacher is remembered mostly for her skirts. They were all that I saw when she gave me her close attention, and they rustled. Her name was Miss Ackroyd and was considered by Dad, a trustee, as an excellent teacher.

The "Eaton order" that fall was of particular interest to me for it included my complete winter outfit of clothes. We always sent two big orders each year, following the arrival of the "Spring and Summer" and of the "Fall and Winter" catalogues. In the fall in question (not to mention such miscellany as underwear and shirts), I got a pair of low rubber boots, two pairs of "German socks" with web straps just below the knees, a cap that could be pulled down over the face like a helmet, and a rather oversized sheepskin coat. At this point the sailor suit and ringlets disappeared and

I was a regular boy.

Only the accent remained. I recollect troubles with "J" sounds that always came out as "Y". So it was my great objective of that first year to ~~er~~adicate all semblance of Swedish from my speech. And sixty years later, one of the greatest regrets of my life is that I was not encouraged by my parents and teachers to retain and cultivate the English-Swedish bilingualism of my childhood.

The large school yard, fenced off from the road and neighboring farms with woven wire, contained the school building, which had a belfry (but no bell), a ten-horse barn (whose west wall was the backstop for baseball), girls' and boys' toilets with a woodshed between, and a pump.

The pupils came from families of several nationalities: Canadian (Ontario), British, American, Swedish, Norwegian and German. Considering them as a group (of 15 to 20) and over several years, they were well-bred, well-behaved (the latter depending on the respect earned by the teacher), and academically mediocre. But there was a rough unruly element, mainly American, which expressed itself in foul language, in urine in our slate-water bottles, in the substitution of "God Bless our old tom cat" for our National Anthem, etc.

The school room was furnished with (I estimate) 36 double seats screwed to stringers (so they could be moved) to form four rows of nine each. Each unit had a shelf under the top for books and slates and the top had two lidded ink wells for our Spenser pens — and the hair braids of the girl in front! There was a teacher's desk, an organ, a globe, the blackboard, a pendulum wall clock (with Standard Time as a label), a set of roller maps, and a large Woodbury heater with a sheet metal cylinder

all round, flanked by woodbox and coal skuttle.

There was an entrance hall that served as a cloakroom and washroom (water pail, basin, soap and roller towel for common use).

A side room, partitioned-off from the schoolroom, housed the library unit (a massive structure of shelves and sliding doors) and also served as a detention room, for culprits awaiting the strap, and a dressing room, for school concerts.

The library came to be very important to me, expecially since there was a dearth of books at home. I believe that I read ~~every one~~ of its three or four hundred (estimated) books. Among these were two series, Highroads to Geography and Highroads to History, and a selection of Dickens, which I remember with particular affection.

In summer we all had to play baseball — with the smallest girls in the outfield. Homeruns came easily to the bigger boys. When Richard graduated I inherited his catcher's mit, and usually caught for both sides. This was not so much from my possessiveness as from my willingness to undertake the risks behind the plate without a mask. Both sides batted with an old "Louisville Slugger". When the girls rebelled, the boys played "One-O-Cat", or we compromised on "Anti-I-Over", using the barn.

Basketball and soccer were played after about 1920, with the acquisition of the respective balls. Also about this time the game of "Duck-on-the-Rock" was introduced. Though new to us, it had undoubtedly been played in the stone-ages.

In winter there was the "shinny" brand of ice hockey, without skates or, on very cold days, "mumbly-peg" with our jack knives to which the floor behind the stove gave testimony.

Our lunches are well-remembered: sandwiches (fried-egg, jam, cheese or peanut-butter), an apple or an orange, a hard-boiled egg, cookies or tarts (rarely cake or pie). My pail was always full, with the result — so was I! There was very little sharing. I can recall the sourish smell of the German kids' bread.

\* \* \*

Some brief general remarks on pre-war (I) prairie schooling seems in order.

Slates were very much in use. Any exercise that lent itself to on-the-spot inspection and correction would never justify the luxury of paper. Certainly in the very early grades, when one was learning to write and to cipher, the slate was in almost exclusive use. And I have some recollection of "graduating" to *paper* in about grade three. Slates varied in size and quality, the best being edged with felt spirally bound with string, both colored, with the general effect a patriotic red, white and blue. Slate pencils were paper wrapped, the general effect being that of miniature barber poles.

Our lined exercise books ranged <sup>from</sup> bulky scribblers of cheap pulpy paper to rather fine thin ones, embellished fore and aft with glossy pictures and detested multiplication tables. The teacher gave out foolscap and drawing paper sparingly for special purposes and these were treated reverently. To this day I am a paper-saver.

I remember the textbooks very well: spellers, grammars, arithmetics, Agriculture, Canadian Civics, geographies and readers. I loved the latter, The Alexandra Readers, and I have a tattered but still cherished one by me now, the Fourth Reader.

There were poems that even I loved to recite: The Bugle Song, A Canadian Boat Song, The Charge of the Light Brigade, Scots, Wha Hae Wi Wallace Bled and many others, all rather short and of the exclamatory type. And a good many remembered ones of the quieter type: Lead, Kindly Light, Today, The Daffodils, The Song my Paddle Sings, etc.

The Prose introduced us to Mr. Pickwick, Don Quixote, Gulliver, Robinson Crusoe, Jim Hawkins, Sinbad; to The Tempest, Pilgrims Progress, Vicar of Wakefield, Norse Stories, and Canadian history from many sources; and, generally speaking, we enjoyed some of the better short works (or <sup>c</sup>exerpts) of the best authors, Canadian, British and American.

Our teachers were officially qualified and, more important, always measured up to their tasks over all eight grades. I can remember, with affection, most of them: Miss Ackroyd, Russel Haig (who strapped me unjustly), Miss Alice Capley (who read "Huckleberry Finn" in daily installments), Miss Jenny Etheridge, Redverse Ross, Mrs. Gertrude Rick (who let me study Euclid as an extra). These were followed after I left by Miss Velesco, Miss McQueen and Miss Jennie Rods<sup>2</sup>th.

\* \* \*

I close this chapter with trees. In all the world, there is probably no class of people that had a greater love of trees than the prairie homesteader. In later life I have known famous deserts and oases great and small; but I don't think that any of my Arab friends love their oases as we loved ours, because we planted ours and cared for them and were one with them.

Trees suitable for prairie plantings were available free of charge from the Indian Head Forest Nursery Station, Indian Head, Saskatchewan, and Dad took early advantage of this, probably in 1905 and 1906. The governmental idea was the providing of shelterbelts and of some shade trees round the buildings on prairie homesteads. But to these Dad added another dimension — a square of trees that he could call a grove.

By the time I first knew it, some five years after planting, the Russian poplars were about 15 feet tall, the Manitoba maple and green ash 10, the white elm 8 and the white spruce about my size. After many years and much thinning it was, by any standard, a forest.

Taken all the year round there was nothing more important on our place than our grove. For myself I lived my spare-time life there, built teepees (of cast-off binder canvases), cooked furtive meals (on Dad's old double-wick stove), read marvelous books, slept on prairie wool — and dreamed. I built my own model homestead there, complete with threshing machines. And a nearby frontier town, complete with jail and a tree for hanging convicts. I lived there with Huck Finn, Robinson Crusoe and Jim Hawkins.

We could see the Livingstone mountains from our place, blue and white-capped in the distance. They were best seen with the morning light upon them — through the trees on the western edge of our grove.

\* \* \*

Anyone who ever went to a country school in those early days will recall the Christmas concert with particular relish — so much so that it has been a favorite topic in published recollections, relieving me of



extended treatment. At Mountain Peak this crowning glory of the year was called our "Christmas Tree", thus relegating our stage efforts to a cut below the Santa Claus feature.

#### A CHRISTMAS TREE AT MOUNTAIN PEAK

The Mountain Peak school board had no Scrooges on it for without doubt they provided the biggest tree, the best decorations and the finest gifts and treats of any school in our area.

But I am already ahead of myself. It all started in November when we began to memorize our recitations and our parts in the skits (called "dialogues" irrespective of number of participants). The approach of "opening night" brought days hectic with dress rehearsals and forgotten lines, and on the very last day we decorated the blackboards with Santa Claus murals. I remember helping with holly borders, beautifully achieved by dusting colored chalk over a stencil.

During the afternoon of that last day the trustees took over. The tree was erected and decorated, twisted streamers were hung from ceiling corners to center which featured a great red paper bell (a perennial), puffy garlands were draped across the windows, and a curtain of bed sheets partitioned off the center stage and wings.

Dad was always early on the big night, and so were his dependents. From a ladder he hung-up hissing gasoline lanterns and lit the topmost candles on the tree. I lit lower candles (red, white, blue and yellow) held upright on the twigs by holders, snap-on or spiral. The tree was a cone of flickering brilliance, and smelt of Christmas.

On stage our juvenile efforts were genuinely appreciated and generously applauded, especially by proud parents whose offspring had just proved to be histrionically unparalleled. The teacher always acted as master of ceremonies and prompter (from the wings).

\* \* \*

My first effort in 1911 must have been submerged in some chorus with my fellow first-graders for it is unremembered. But 1912 is memorable. In November the teacher, Miss Ackroyd, assigned what I shall call occupational ditties to the seven and eight-year-olds. There were two that appealed to me: one about a locomotive engineer, another about a steam tractor engineer. I got neither. My stage ambition was to be a lowly shoemaker. I remember offering mild objection, and of appealing for a piece about the Titanic (the sinking of which, on April 14, had resulted in a thousand drawings on my slate and notebooks of a ship going down, beside an iceberg, with passengers jumping from the upraised stern). But she was adamant, so I was an aspiring shoemaker at the Christmas Tree. And just now after nearly sixty years I have, to my amazement, recalled my lines.

I was introduced, I came out on center stage before a sea of faces, I bowed, I climbed up onto a bench and recited:

"When I grow up to be a man

I will be a shoemaker if I can and I can

I will sit on my bench with my legs crossed so (action)

And in and out will my needle go. (more action)

I will sew so strong that my work will wear

Till there is nothing left but my stitches there!"

I dismounted from the bench, I bowed, and left the stage to thunderous applause.

\* \* \*

The rest comes vividly to mind, and I see it in the present tense.

Our closing number over and the curtains removed, we go to sit with our parents or, preferably, round the wonderful tree.

Outside the jingle of sleigh bells and the prancing feet of "reindeer". The entry of Santa all red and white. The ho-hoing and other antics hardly suggest high intellectual capacities; but he is smart: he knows all of the parents and most of the kids by name — including me! I get a nice new toy and a bag of candy.

A "lap" supper in family groups. The pre-school kids bedded-down in the library room, and the dance begins. A fiddle, our organ, Carl Carlson's accordion, and red-headed Howard Caveny calling (after the opening waltz):

"Salute your partners, corner address  
 All join hands and circle to the left .....  
 First couple out to the couple on the right  
 Circle four  
 Birdie in the cage and circle three  
 Birdie hop out and crow hop in  
 Circle three  
 Crow hop out and give birdie a swing  
 Allemand left, grand right and left  
 Promenade when you meet your own.  
 Second couple out (that's Dad and Mother!) .....  
 Allemand left for the corners all  
 Right hand to partner, grand chain all  
 Corn in the crib and wheat in the stack  
 Meet your honey and promenade back."

That's the end and I join in the clapping.

Then a Circle Two-Step (as a mixer).

"Ladies on the inside, gents on the outside

Ladies go right and gents go left . . . .

Everybody two-step."

Dad is dancing with the teacher!

More square dances ("First couple balance and first couple swing, down the center and divide the ring . . . .") interspersed with waltzes (fast and slow), schottisches, and polkas (sedate heel-and-toe, or wild Swedish ones). And children's eyes that won't stay open.

Finally, the Home Sweet Home waltz. Bundling up, gathering up, snuggling down in the deep straw of the sleigh box and a smooth slide home. Jingling of our own sleigh bells in tune with twinkling stars, dissolving in sleep . . . .

\* \* \*

Looking back over 60 years to the time when I first became fully aware of my surroundings, it is not easy to say what impressed me most. Still, I think that I am pretty safe in selecting the subject of the following vignette.

#### STEAM ENGINES

The steam tractor, a black and greasy giant of ponderous motion, puffing and hissing and smelling of steam and hot oil, had to be the utter ultimate in fascination to the farm boy. At a very young age I was accepted by divers engineers as a fellow devotee, and knew all about boilers and

flues and crossheads and waterglasses and pressure gauges and safety valves. I could recognize at great distances the distinctions between Case, Rumley, Avery (under-slung, that was easy), Sawyer-Massey or Garr-Scott.

I knew the code for the steam whistles. This is best illustrated by the threshing outfit. Three long blasts was for the "tankee" to hurry up and get water to the engine. A long single blast meant threshing was ready to start; this would be blown in the morning and after lunch. Two short blasts warned everyone at the setting to take care, the machinery was starting. Several short and long blasts urged grain wagons to hurry up. One long and one short was a call for fuel, straw or coal.

Mostly I knew these steamers as they pulled great gang plows, up to 12 bottoms, or powered the threshing outfit. But in the very early days there was the Carmangay Freighter. It passed on the road along our southern boundary, a sleek steamer pulling a coal tender and several wagons. It served the town of Carmangay from the Stavely railhead. It made the 40 mile east - west round trip about twice a week. It was finally put out of business in 1911 - 12 with the building of the Aldersyde - Kipp line of the C.P.R., which served Carmangay.

In speaking of steam engines, I must not forget the trains. Oh, the wondrous, fire-eating, steam-breathing, earth-shaking locomotives that rushed past the station, side rods clanking in a hiss of steam — and making you run down the platform to get a close-up view. There it stands snorting, towering on giant wheels, the injector pumps working, a hiss of released air in the trainline. A rosy glow and a sound of shovelling and the clank of the fire-box doors.

But the locomotive does not need this close-up to be fascinating. Ah, the speeding train, the melancholy moan of the whistle, beckoning, promising adventure to the lonely, restless boy. And now, alas, replaced by the hoarse-throated diesels, they are only poignant sound-ghosts of wistful memory.

## CHAPTER 5. OH, THOSE NEIGHBORS OF OURS!

This is the story of pioneers, bachelors or families. It is highly selective, dealing only with the ones we knew best. And its title must be an exclamation!

Within our ken there was a great array of characters, Dickensian in scope and quality, gathered from all corners of the earth. Their story is one of toil and privation, courage and frustration, faith and hope, independence and interdependence. The last pair of attributes need explanation. Independence was the great lure to which the homesteader had responded: to be free of landlords and bosses, to own one's own land, to fall or rise on the strength of one's own hard work, thrift and good management. But the economy of scarcity engendered interdependence, a willingness to share, to help and be helped, to observe the Golden Rule, to be good neighbors — in spite of race, creed or social background.

My neighborhood recollections run rather strongly to frailties and idiosyncrasies that make for amusing tales — some of which I shall tell. But the humor was interlaced with pathos and tragedy, and to give realistic balance to prairie life these latter should be touched upon.

There was the tragic death of Frank Wetterhall already recounted and that of Mr. Dunton who was crushed beneath a boulder which he was trying to bury. The incidence of insanity and suicide was all too frequent. Accidents around horses and machines took their toll of life and limb.

Some stories that one might tell are more pathetic than humorous. There was the Bavarian bachelor baron, who crossed in love, exiled himself to homestead life with his faithful servant-valet in constant attendance upon him. There was the Scot, also unlucky in love, who to spite the young

lady, married another 20 years his senior and came a-homesteading. There was the neighbor who never came sober from town, whose horses stopped in our yard at all hours of day or night, and who always lay prostrate in the wagon box with the lines tied round his neck.

There was that most remarkable hermit, Old Man Shaw (he can be named because he left no issue), who "holed-up" in his shack in the fall, well-supplied with provisions and firewood, and never came out until the following spring. He got his water by melting snow, and piled the ashes from his fire in one corner as a hygienic repository for excrement. It is truly said of Shaw that he always did his spring house cleaning with a shovel!

Then there was Wah Lee, Chinese restaurateur, whose sense of humor, generosity and geniality won all our hearts. If you came into his place feeling out of sorts, he would greet you with, "Whatta malla you?" And would soon have you laughing.

There was Mrs. Williams who permanently changed jobs with her husband and, while he slaved in the kitchen, she farmed. And very well too, except she could not rig-up tandem hitches. As a result she drove as many as eight horses abreast, using pebbles to activate the outside horses. Dad said that the pebbles were hardly effective, that her team was a moving crescent, and that she herself had developed the longest and strongest string of swear words to be heard this side of tarnation!

\* \* \*

Of all our excellent neighbors, Phil Lavergne was my favorite. He was a French-Canadian bachelor with a wonderful accent to emphasize his hearty good humor. Although above average in build he had rather small feet, which were always well-shod in polished boots. I am not sure I ever saw him



without a vest, which accommodated his gold watch and massive gold chain. And I think he was equally consistent in always bringing a candy treat for the Johnson "Keeds".

Phil had great confidence in the soundness of Dad's judgment in running a farm, and it was noted on numerous occasions that he copied details in Dad's program of progress. He followed Dad in erecting buildings, in buying machinery — even in the matter of the 1915 Model T. He had been a butcher in Duluth, Minnesota, and he always superintended our butchering. Dad told of an occasion when one of our four-horse team, used on the 16-inch breaking sulky, developed a sore shoulder. Dad fixed-up a three-horse hitch and continued breaking. The same evening Phil led (he wasn't much of a rider) one of his horses to our place, insisting that he could spare him for a week or two.

Card playing, especially "500", was a favorite passtime especially in long winter evenings. Here Phil was at his best: always boisterous, always over-bidding his hand, always full of strange expletives, always resounding in victory. Fidele Chaney his nephew and successor was exactly the same. All this was rough and a bit risque, but in the context absolutely endearing.

A succession of male relatives came from Quebec to spend a few months with Phil. There was handsome young Alphonse Ducette, who imported a beautiful yellow-wheeled rubber-tired buggy. His horses were decked out in gaudy ribbons and polished brass, and his buggy whip was all tassels and silver bands. One relative, Emile, was even more amazing. He had a stoppage in spe<sup>e</sup>ch, and could feed himself only with great difficulty by poking food

into his mouth. When Phil left the house Emile would lock the door. On one such occasion a fire started in the house. Seeing the smoke Dad rushed over. Emile was looking out the window, helpless with fright. Dad broke down the door and managed to put the fire out. There wasn't much conversation. "All he could say was Chee! Chee!, Chee! Chee!" Dad had another occasion to call and Emile came to the window. He was trying to eat beet pickles. "Judas Priest," said Dad, "I thought the man had cut his throat!"

I recall an interesting argument between Dad and Phil about accelerating their new Model T Fords. Dad indicated that when he wanted to go faster he gave "her" more gas. (That is, advanced the right-hand lever on the steering post). Phil had a different method (presumably related to the left-hand lever) and insisted "Non! Non! Me, I feed'er spark!"

Before leaving our French Canadians, I will recount a favorite story which, though first told to Phil with some misgivings, became his favorite "clean" story.

A Habitant farmer had two little pigs for sale, one of which, although a month older, was much the smaller of the two. A prospective buyer came up and after examining the grunTERS decided on the larger pig.

"How much will you take for the oldest one?"

"I tink you're mak' de meestake. De hol'is' one ees de yonges' one."

"What!"

The Habitant repeated his statement, but still there was no light of understanding in the face of the customer. He called to his wife. This lady came bustling up and, pushing her husband aside, proceeded to make matters clear.

"You see ma husban' she's not spick de h'Engleesh vir' good, an' what she's try for say ees dees: de leettles' one ees de beegges' one, and' de beegges' one she's de leettle feller!"

And there was O. C.

The unfortunate thing about O. C. was that he could cook — his pie-plant (rhubarb) pie was superlative — and this led to his record of marrying every housekeep he ever had. You see, he spent most of his time in the kitchen, showing the housekeeper how toothsome cookery should be done. Perhaps I should say right here that the record was two out of two — two housekeepers, two weddings.

We had known O. C. as a rather lonely bachelor who walked over to see us on Sunday evenings. He and Dad always talked quietly of farming and gardening — Dad smoking and O. C. scratching himself.

So his visit, after the first wedding, was rather startling to behold. All the bride's relatives having come for the wedding, decided to stay on. There were so many of them that they had to come by hayrack, sitting on chairs, boxes and tubs. Besides O. C., the skipper, the passengers consisted of the bride and her two children of a previous marriage, Grandma Hopper, Grandpa Hopper, Aunt Opal and Uncle Bun. This prairie schooner having navigated our pasture arrived at our barnyard gate — and I was sent running to open same. Grey bearded Grandpa Hopper (the pilot) wearing a straw boater was perched high on the front super-structer, clucking and slapping at the team. The rack passed through the gate and started for the house — straight for our clothes line. The wire caught Grandpa Hopper under the chin and deposited him amidship breaking the skipper's chair in the process.

I ran up and caught the team by the bridles.

The boater hat rolled aft where Uncle Bun retrieved it and rushed forward to help Grandpa up; but that incensed<sup>n</sup> pilot pushed him aside and

standing up with legs spread wide and glaring at O. C., gave tongue.

"Why in thunder and lightning don't you tell a man where to drive!"

Well, O. C. and his instant family was a mine inexhaustible for instances of domestic misadventure but we must be content with the present occasion. I can still see Dad helping the ladies to disembark from the hayrack.

By way of postscript, O. C.'s first marriage was after several years annulled by reason of bride's being still married to her first spouse. O. C.'s next marriage was with a strong-minded English spinster, who was universally regarded as being "good for him". And so it turned out to be.

\* \* \*

I think that all will agree that this is a chapter of anecdote<sup>s</sup>, and that to append any more would merely extend what has been started. There are more, many more, but I must not risk offending the descendants. Though, heaven knows, I recall all of our old neighbors with respect and affection.

## CHAPTER 6. THE SEASONS

My narrative, being rather specific as to dates, does not, I think, properly accommodate a general account of what we did in the succession of seasons. So I shall treat them each in turn, with no particular year in mind, and with no need to introduce the chronology of this history.

\* \* \*

### SPRING

Every farmer, I am sure, will start the seasons with Spring for this is a logical beginning, a time of revival, of renewal. The earth, casting off its mantle of sleep and waking to a dash of rain in its upturned face, opens its eyes to the sun. And the farmer bestirs himself to the new season.

I remember early spring mornings when I went out to milk (having become a regular milker at age eight). Dad would be calling "Cope! Cope! Cope!" and Doc, the big white gelding would respond, leading his herd of eighteen to the barn. The milk delivered to mother's care, I would return to the barn. Sunlight streamed-in through the open upper half of the door, a slanting shaft of shimmering gold in the galaxy of stable dust. There was a friendly smell of horses, with just a touch of neat's foot from newly-oiled harness. A rattling of halter chains as the horses nuzzled their oats in the feed boxes, mingling with the scratch and scrape of curry combs as Dad and Richard helped the shedding of long winter coats. (Howard was at that moment catering over-indulgently to gluttonous pigs).

The first spring work was picking rocks and fencing, hard on us but easy on the horses, which were regularly rotated "to break-in their shoulders".

Around the house Mother superintended heightened activities in washing, scrubbing, airing and beating, and there ~~was~~ scope for the youngest boy in the fire-wood and well-water departments.

I remember fetching the cows from greening pastures, blue-patched with crocuses. I remember the quiet of evenings when one could hear the trill of water in the distant coulee and the croaking frogs in the nearby pond. And the green mist gathering over the poplars in the grove.

There was also Dad's drastic spring barbering, the clipping variety that left an even eighth-inch stubble all over one's head. There was Mother's prediction, "You will catch your death of pneumonia", followed by her command "Go back to the house this instant and put on your shoes!"

Mostly I remember the evenings, after supper, the calm air cooling with the gathering dusk. Stubble burning (common in the early days) was usually done as the dew came from an almost windless sky. A hayrack half-filled with straw and chain-hitched to an upended iron section of harrow, a blazing drag constantly fed from the rack. I up front, driving the team from a high perch on the standard (like Grandpa Hopper!), and behind a long trail of fire changing tawny stubble to black earth. And a delightful smell of straw smoke. Or, another evening, the pickling of seed grain for next days sowing. This was a treatment against smut, using bluestone or formaldehyde, in either case one pound to 40 gallons of water. In very early days we used a sprinkling can with shovel mixing. Later we had an Owens Pickler, for formaldehyde. The wagon box was always covered with a

tarp to keep the fumes in — and clean, pungent fumes they were.

\* \* \*

### SUMMER

With us Spring passed into Summer when the seeding was finished.  
And so to plowing — to summer fallow.

Now, indeed, it was barefoot time. Ah, one's bare feet on the cool, damp sole of a furrow! A strain of tugs, creaking in coulter and beam, the snapping of roots with the share cut, and the lifting and slipping of the furrow slice. The flubbering of horses' nostrils. The widening strip of black. And the fertile smell of fresh earth mold in shining friable slices.

There were two drawbacks to summer:: the pulling or hoeing of weeds and the poisoning of gophers (Citellus richardsoni). In the first I suffered only monotony and backache; but in the second qualms and heartache as I spooned out wheat, treated with "Kill-Em-Quick" in a hundred gopher holes. From childhood, when I tamed my first gopher, I had been a conscientious objector against all killing, except in cases of self-preservation. Of course, the gopher is culpable for crop losses, and I used to be wary of his burrows when galloping across the natural prairie. But he is a friendly responsive creature (I can still bring a wild gopher to eat out of my hand in a matter of minutes), upstanding and bright-eyed, and his uplifted tail waggles when he runs.

Summer brought sports days, ball games, picnics, wild-berry picking (saskatoons and gooseberries) and, at its end, the agricultural fairs.

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## FALL

Fall began when the binder was brought out for repairs. The first cutting was of stubbed<sup>l</sup>-in crops, either green-feed oats or a light wheat crop, possibly as early as mid-August.

I can see myself now (and all boys of my time and place) as I walked behind Dad's binder. The bull wheel flattened the stubble and pulverized the clods as if its special purpose was to make a path for a barefoot boy. The great machine towered above me topped by a 15-foot bamboo whip. The chopping clatter of the cutter bar predominated as it chewed incessantly at the wall of wheat always before it. The reel gave an accompaniment plop-plop, as successive slats slapped the cut stems to the moving platform canvas. Up between the elevating canvases went the wheat, then down the inclined table to the packing fingers. These pressed the stems into a larger and larger bundle until the pressure triggered the next phase. Up came the <sup>s</sup>emicircular needle with twine in its eye, backward turned the kicker arms -- and plump went the bundle, miraculously tied, onto its waiting carrier. I would almost hold my breath in the expectancy of the next disgorgment. And, as my eyes were engrossed by the new bundle packing tighter and tighter, my ears would be full of the whirl of wheels and clatter of chains, which would sometimes blend into a trill that quavered deliciously in my head.

My first real job in the harvest field was in 1915 (the year of the bumper crop) which involved the clearing of bundles (sheaves) from the backswath. Dad went round the field in the regular anti-clockwise manner, the binder, with carrier down, ejecting bundles into an outer border of standing grain. I ran behind tossing same onto the stubble in the wake of the binder. At the end of the circuit Dad worked back until he met me.



The way thus cleared, he was able to make a clockwise backswath, opening the entire field. Dad always used the 6-foot "Massey" for this, as the regular 8-foot cut would overload the binder in heavy grain.

Later that year, with a labor shortage, I graduated to full-time stooking and was kept out of school for the purpose.

There was a lull after cutting and stooking, when the potatoes were dug. And then came threshing!

Threshing! The hardest work of all, on men and women and older children alike, and yet the happiest. Happiest because of the romance surrounding big outfits and big crews, and of the reward of good red wheat in the bin. Finally, the day came when the custom outfit (usually Carl Carlson's rig Rumley) had eaten-up all of our neighbor's stooks — and we were next! The cook car and bunk car and a few bundle racks (to clear for the setting) arrived as mild preliminaries. Then the great steamer and separator, slow ponderous tandem, coming up the lane and across the yard, leaving yard wide herringbone lug tracks, to follow to the midfield setting.

The separator was unhitched and, while the engine swung round, the tongue was straightend, holes were dug close in front of the front wheels, the feeder extended, the blower turned aft, the grain wagon backed up to the weigher pipe. Then the engine lined-up and men shouldered the 10-inch belt and went to meet it. The belt, with a twist in it, was hoisted up to the flywheel. The engine backed tightening the belt, pulling the separator wheels into their restraining holes. Bundle wagons coming up to the feeder on either side. The dusty separator man sighting along the belt from the drive pulley. The engineer gives two short blasts of the whistle and the

belt moves, slapping itself; it runs true and the separator man motions for the pitchers to start feeding. Threshing has started on our place!

After threshing, or sometimes during threshing if that operation were delayed by bad weather, we made one or more expeditions to the hills for wood. At first I knew of this only on the receiving end — with sawbuck, axe and saw; but later I made several trips myself, so can speak at first hand.

Usually four wagons made the three-day trip, three of ours and one of Phil Lavergne's. The wagons were stripped-down to the running gear, only the reach connecting the rear wheels to the front. Tents, bedding, food, axes, oats, greenfeed, camp utensils were strapped onto the front bolster — and there the driver sat <sup>with</sup> his feet on the doubletrees. One day up to the forested foothills, one to cut and load, one to negotiate the descent to the flats and home: that was the program.

Our outward journey was through Old Man Shaw's place and he always accosted us with a double-barreled shotgun, once wearing long winter underwear — presumably he was ready to go into hibernation!

After 12 to 14 hours, to us a normal-length work day, we would camp near a half-frozen stream with the woods high above us on a steep shaded slope. After supper we would make a log reflector about 15 feet from the tent door and light a fire in front of it. We would go to bed ~~warm~~ but wake up cold at least once, with some hardy individual restarting the fire.

We would cut dead poplar and some lodgepole pine from a burn and also some green poplar. The feather-edged chips would fly and there would be the tangy, bracing fragrance of living wood. The logs would be skidded down to the wagons and piled about four-feet high butts forward, held in by

long stakes in the bolster posts and bound by logging chains which were tightened by a pole lever purchased over a transverse log. This lever would be at an angle of some 30 degrees and tied down to the stern, giving a rakish rigging to the load.

The most exciting part was coming down the steep pitches on the way home. We would smooth-lock the rear wheels on ordinary pitches and rough-lock on the steep ones. A smooth-lock merely prevents the wheels from turning; a rough-lock provides for a few wraps of chain around the felloe and tire which digs into the ground beneath the locked wheels. Without these wheel locks the loads would have run onto the horses, and there would have been no survivors.

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#### WINTER

Winter work revolved around the chores of the farmyard and the hauling of wheat to the elevator. The latter may be worthy of comment.

By sunrise the four-horse team was hitched to the 125 bushel grain tank ( a high wagon box that expanded to extra width above the wheels) and driven to one of several field granaries. There the wheat was shovelled (or scooped) into the tank, easy when the grain was high in the bin, extremely hard as one had to pitch from floor level. Loaded, and well-sweated in the process, man gave over to horses for the long pull into town. In cold weather one walked behind the wagon listening for double-tree clapping that would tell of slackening by leaders or wheelers. Arrived at the elevator, there was the drive onto a shaky weighing platform, dismounting (unless you were a part of tare weight), watching your wagon tilted into the pit and the opening of the endgate. The elevator man took a sample of the

wheat as it slid down and put the sample-box in safe keeping. You got a ticket for net weight and drove home.

At our distance from town we could make two trips a day.

This account should end with a rather fervent statement that the coming of the loader, powered with a gasoline engine was one of the greatest labor-saving devices that the farmer eventually came to enjoy.

Well, winter was not all work. Indeed it was the season of some leisure — and most of our private and community indulgence in entertainment. I have told something of country dances which followed the Christmas concert. But there were other events that generated dancing, notably the socials, box and shadow.

We pupils at Mountain Peak knew well in advance of these socials and on the big day we tidied the school, and washed the blackboards preliminary to our efforts in decorative art. The stenciled borders were perhaps reminiscent of Christmas, but rural landscapes (predominantly harvest fields) in colored chalk were uniquely social (box or shadow).

The boxes were prepared with pride by womenfolk from eighteen to ages too advanced to be bandied about. Inside, the box were the best ingredients of supper that could be made or bought. Fried chicken, sandwiches (dainty by school-lunch standards), frosted cakes with walnut halves on top, cookies, oranges, possibly pie, probably pickles, certainly candy. Then there were knives, forks, spoons and napkins. And right on top of the napkins a card with the lady's name. With the lid on<sup>and</sup> the fancy wrapping tied in wide ribbon, there was superimposed a kind of floral and feathery decoration, suggesting that daring millinery instinct<sup>n</sup> in<sup>Λ</sup>ate in all females.

At the box social the auctioneer outranked and outshone any fiddler

or even square-dance caller, for he was at once the life of the party and the money raiser. Failing to get a professional auctioneer (gratis), the choice would fall upon some tireless, fullmouthed wit, of which there was no dearth in our community.

Dad always knew Mother's box and he would buy it (at a dollar or two) or arrange with Steve Marshall or Hector Lamont or other married neighbor to buy the boxes of each other's wives.

The real sport and profit was generated by the bachelors (who always outnumbered unmarried ladies). Any given bachelor thought he knew from his spying and hint-hunting which was the box of his lady love. Now comes the presumed box of the young belle with several suitors, and scope for a high knock-down price by the auctioneer. The bachelors bid into astronomical figures — I seem to recall seven or eight dollars. Certainly, I recall some of their disappointments — of eating with dubious relish the delicacies from the box of some motherly old lady.

Then, on with the dance.

The shadow social was essentially along the same lines, the difference being that you bid-in a shadow rather than a box. The shadow was achieved by placing the lady in question behind a bed-sheet curtain and in front of a strong gasoline lantern. And behind this curtain misrepresentation was rampant: the tall became short and vice versa, the slender gave dumpy silhouettes (but hardly vice versa), the vogue in face profiles ran strongly to witches, and the hats and hairdos were beyond description.

In the matter of identification, shadows were more elusive than boxes and Dad never knew who he was bidding on. The make-up artists saw to that. Mother as a tall lady with a plasticine nose was totally unrecognizable.

But a box (undecorated) came with shadow revealed, and it, like its box social counterpart was chock-full of toothsome delicacies.

We<sup>are</sup><sub>^</sub> all pretty tired of Winter long before it ends, and are prepared to welcome even the slush and mud of the break-up time. Lengthening days bring warmth and gentle air, and it's Spring again.

## CHAPTER 7. THE WAR YEARS

The war years come into this story as a kind of interlude, a time of unreality. The values we lived <sup>by</sup> were changed. We saw supreme sacrifices, and great profits, made in the name of patriotism.

The drought of 1914 was nearly as bad as that of 1910, and heat records were set over dying wheat fields in July. Then August, and war.

Strangely, the war was as unreal to my elders then — as it is to me now. The popular consensus was for an early victory, without hardship or much loss of life. Young men volunteered in the spirit of adventure and soon appeared among us romantically khaki-clad. Our pro-German neighbors (Germans and Irish with a sprinkling of Americans and Scandinavians) spoke of our early defeat and quoted army figures in support — against which we threw the weight of the British navy. In our community we kept calm in the face of pro-German and anti-British pronouncements, which gradually disappeared; but there was violence in the cities, often directed against an establishment that offended only in its having a German name.

Within a few weeks, there were appeals for support of worthy causes: Red Cross Fund, Patriotic Fund, War Relief Fund, Belgian Relief Fund. With almost a crop failure that year we were not able to contribute — until we sold a couple of light horses to the Army at exorbitant prices.

At school a new Canadian flag appeared and we read of the efforts of Sir Edward Grey, British Foreign Minister, to avert war, and were introduced to Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty. For my own part, I remember strengthening feelings of loyalty to the King and Queen and to the flag — these were the tangible symbols of Canada and the

Empire. All other aspects of love of country were too abstract and vague to move me.

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The year 1915 was most memorable. In March Dad bought Frank Wetterhall's old homestead from Steve Marshall, who in turn bought other and more convenient land. It was a very early spring with operations on the land started in early April, and all the wheat sown by the first week in May. Then the rains came: three inches in May, four in June, four in July. An ideal season and a bumper crop, fifty and sixty bushels per acre on summer fallow — and wartime prices, \$2.50 a bushel! We had 80 acres in wheat on the land just bought, and the proceeds more than paid for the entire quarter!

It was fantastic. We had always scrimped and saved to make ends meet, now we had over \$20,000 — and we bought a Model T!

By the end of the year it was evident that the war would be a long cruel stalemate. I remember some who had, or would go, overseas. Blake Allen, Dodger Reynolds, Mike Palardy, Al Valcourt, Herb Nelson. Blake and Herb didn't come back.

Prohibition vied with the war for public interest. The referendum was in July 1915, with enforcement of the Act a year later. A seven-year drought — relieved by bootleggers.

Yield-wise 1916 was no better than average, but wheat prices made it a highly profitable season. That was the year we bought the Victrola — and the voice of Caruso was to be heard on the homestead. In December Dad



and Mother paid a triumphal visit, in fur-collared coats and a general show of affluence, to their old home in Geneseo, Illinois. Returning in February by way of Winnipeg, they went to Eaton's and ordered lots of furniture, kitchenware and crockery — to follow by freight.

So 1917 was introduced in affluence. And so it continued with a windmill, addition to the house, a wonderful McLaughlin - Buick D 45 — and, at harvest time, Dad gave me my first "dollar watch", a wonderful Pocket Ben.

But there was no show of affluence respecting my bicycle. Howard had inherited Richard's bike and there was every indication that it would never survive his tenure of it. Well, I got a frame with pedals and sprocket, and in succession a chain, a seat, wheels front and back, but only one tire. This tire was a leaky single tube and I filled it with corncobs. I made the other tire by splicing the ends of a length of 1 1/2 inch rope. I used to ride this bike as much as 20 miles on a Sunday on dirt and gravel roads. The splice gave a bump everytime it came around.

\* \* \*

Of course 1918 is remembered as the last year of war. We got the news of the armistice on November 11th and next day, a memorable Tuesday, we burned the Kaiser in effigy.

On the homestead we remembered it as a drought year — with a fine, dry fall that brought the terrible influenza<sup>2</sup> epidemic.

In October and November we lived through the third worst disease disaster in recorded history. It was called the Spanish flu, but that was

a misnomer. It was pandemic, prevalent around the world, and it did not take time to sweep across the earth — it seemed to break-out everywhere at once. And when it was over 25,000,000 had died, nearly twice the number of the war dead. Any thanksgiving for the new peace was tempered by mourning for the newly dead.

Our family met the deadly peril much like most families. Dad got our doctor's prescription for spiritous liquors, mainly brandy. Mother had her home remedies: salt-water gargle, onion syrup, camphor bags suspended inside our shirts. We wore cheese-cloth masks, regularly boiled and changed, over nose and mouth. Richard volunteered to venture into town for any essential business.

When Richard returned from town we wondered if the groceries were safe, and opened our mail with trepidation. And he reported on who had died.

It was a sad story. So many victims were Richard's pals for the toll was heaviest among those in their 20s and 30s. Tom Norcombe died counting aloud as he did as a child, counting himself to sleep. So said his parents, and they died, too. Jim McAlpine took his children to the Agricultural School (an emergency hospital) in Claresholm. There they died. and Jim came back to the farm to do his chores. And there he died, too.

There was also the report on who were stricken, and of those who had blue lips, which was a mark of death. Often we heard of death before illness for the flu was quick — three days enough. Often we heard of recovery, then relapse and death.

A terrible time and well I remember it, for I knew many who died — some 25 or 30 in our community of about 400.

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Our boys in Khaki, the living that is, returned in 1919. Some elected to be trained in agriculture at the University, in preparation for taking up land under soldier settlement schemes. Some went to veteran's hospitals for indeterminate periods. Some were just absorbed into the community. In any case there would be no more mortal combats in the grey light of the early dawn.

On the farm we found cost of living high, but so were the prices. And a second dry year in a row.

It was a period of growing discontent, a let-down of morale that had been artificially upheld by the common purpose of conducting a war. Then came 1920, and with it post-war recession. The war years were over.

## CHAPTER 8. THE TWENTIES

The dynastic empires of the Hapsburgs, Hohenzolherns, Ottomans and Romanovs were newly dead and gone, and I, just fifteen, was bursting into life. It was time for me to prove that I was no longer a child, to establish myself as a person. It was the brave new world of the Twenties.

This was a time of change, perhaps unprecedented in both scope and rate. Suddenly gasoline filling stations emerged, like mushrooms after a rain, and "speed corners" appeared on all the main roads — for almost overnight the automobile had become a way of life. Biplanes resolved out of distant skies roared overhead, and shot out of sight — and we gaped and marvelled,,thrilling to this new dimension of modern man. Abruptly our air, called ether, was filled with radio waves. These we caught by "high clothes-lines," called aerials, and we sorted them out and amplified them by condensers and tubes, so they come out as words and music in our headsets. "Judas Priest!" Dad exclaimed, "What will they do next!" Naturally,"they" took stock of the situation and exploited the new technology. So we had millionaires in Detroit, bushpilots in our northland and Charlie McCarthy on the air.

These, for me, were the good old days; but all the days of my youth were good — and at this distance in time, certainly old. Looking back on them, my assessment is that I had everything but money. Lack of buying power led to well-learned lessons in self-reliance. And my life was so full and satisfying that I can't help but feel sorry for today's teenager, in spite of his money and other "advantages". For example, at age about 13 I advanced my childish marvelling of the stars into a study of astronomy — based on a new accession to the school library. There

was considerable encouragement to find that my independent theory of the shape of our galaxy and of the earth's position in it was confirmed by the best authorities. And having mastered the optical system of a refracting telescope I proceeded, in due course, to build one. It had an overall weight of about a ton!

This telescope started with a<sup>v</sup>object lens from a pair of spectacles (which gave me a spare) that Mother bought, according to my specifications, at the 5-and 10 - cent store in Calgary. It had a focal length of 96 inches. So my telescope tube was two four foot lengths of 2 1/2 inch iron pipe inserted into either end of an old blower pulley from a thresher. The high-centered, barrel-shaped, pulley counterbalanced nicely between the bed-pieces of an old grindstone stand. The tube now had a good up - and - down motion, but very little side-to-side movement. So I put the grindstone stand on an old storm door which was on a still older, and tongueless, buckboard <sup>run</sup>ing gear. Now having inserted my lenses (the eye-piece, one inch focal length, was from a toy kaleidoscope) I was ready. Sitting on a milking stool at the rear of this contraption I got bead on, say the moon and pulling on the appropriate rope attached to the front axle and pushing forward the telescope swung into position. It was highly successful: moon craters, the four big sat<sup>e</sup>llites of Jupiter, the rings of Saturn were mine to see. The telescope was famous in our district for several years. It magnified 96 X. And it did weigh about a ton!

One of the most significant events of my life occurred just before the turn of the roaring decade — I joined the Lone Scouts of America. One day on Stavelly's Main Street a newsboy vending the Saturday Blade and Chicago Ledger induced me to buy his other Boyce publication,

The Lone Scout. Lone Scouts had been formed some years earlier by W.D. Boyce to extend activities of Boy Scouts, which operated in troops, to the lone boy of small villages and farming communities. Because of a relatively isolated membership, the Lone Scout magazine was a necessary communication medium. And it became the most stimulating and creative boy's paper of its time, written entirely by the Lone Scouts themselves. This amateur authorship must not be equated with inferior contributions. They were of very high order, in many cases stepping stones to professional writing careers.

I passed all seven degrees in woodcraft and related subjects, and saw my name over several articles, poems and stories. I corresponded with several Lone Scouts in the U.S. and Canada — and still do, with the survivors.

When the organization merged with the Boy Scout Association in 1924 and the magazine was discontinued, Lone Scouts developed some of the Tribe Papers, previously hobby efforts, into replacements for the parent paper. One in particular the Elbeetee (L.B.T., Lone Beaver Tribe) is still flourishing, entirely by voluntary support a half century later. And my name still appears over articles, poems and stories. I am Elbeetian No. 904, known in some quarters as "Alphabet" Johnson.

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I had now experienced a modicum of independence. I knew something of the outer realities, and was aware of myself in some depth. I had grown-up in an environment which stressed a necessary connection between effort and reward. That I was blessed with a good mind and a strong body, I now knew and was never to doubt; but doubtless, too, was the insistent

need to work if I were to achieve. My course was clear: to educate myself for entrance to <sup>the</sup> University of Alberta, eventually to follow a career in science — with sidelines in literature and writing. This course was set in my mid-teens and I have never deviated from it.

My formal education at Mountain Peak ended with grade VIII, or a bit short of it since pressure of farm work prevented me from writing the Departmental exams. Our teacher at the time, Mrs. Gertrude Rick, became a part of my aspirations and loaned me her set of old high school texts — as used in Pictou, Nova Scotia at the turn of the century. The set seems to have lacked only the algebra books. I remember particularly Euclid's Geometry, which introduced me to the fascination of mathematics, and a book on human physiology. Shakespeare assumed new dimensions and, encouraged by my capacity to memorize, I began to quote him in resounding voice and, I fear, with <sup>ic</sup>gestulations.

Of course, there was no academic credit for these studies, but they were the springboard that launched me. The next step was to get an outline of the high school curriculum from the Principal of Stavelly school, so that I could work for matriculation credits. My efforts were spread over several years, including two terms at Claresholm School of Agriculture (graduation from which gave me matriculation credits in science). Finally, I matriculated — without having been inside of a high school, except to write the examinations in June, or the supplementals in August.

None of my family had gone beyond grade VII, though in their areas of special competence they were a good deal smarter than I. However, I was a person apart. Dad was non-committal and non-indulgent. I did not ask for, nor did he suggest, any time off from my farm work. Mother

was more decided in her opinion and openly declared that I would one day be "famous". Both made me feel that they stood behind me, and were proud of me.

\* \* \*

In the spring of 1921 my schooling at Mountain Peak ended (the compulsory age having been passed). By this time we were farming 800 acres and there was need for three outfits in the field. So I became a third part (with Richard and Howard) in the operations of seed-bed preparation (mainly double discing the stubble land), sowing, summer-fallow plowing, and duck-foot<sup>†</sup> cultivation of summer-fallow just before cutting. Eight horses (four and four) were used on the large double disc, five (three wheelers and two leaders) on the 2- bottom, 14 inch gang plows, and four abreast on drills, cultivators and binders.

There are stories relating to these long summery days with machines and horses. Little things, such as learning to juggle three stones with professional skill while the horses rested at the headlands, bigger events as my most spectacular runaway. But for me in my secret heart there was, above all, the ordeal of my phobic fear of lightning — and my struggle against it.

Many years before, thunder and lightning had fascinated me, and I was completely without fear. Our electrical storms could be extremes of violence with almost continuous flashes and crashes with the smell of ozone in the air. Mother would imprison me in the house on such occasions and would continually caution me.



"Come away from the screen door!"

"Don't sit under the 'phone!"

Well, one day I did sit under the telephone — and lightning struck the line nearby. I was knocked-out completely. I remember a dash of cold water in my face and of coming-to, prostrate on the floor, imagining myself a great white bird, floundering, trying to fly. I retained a feather or two from that bird, ~~and~~ I was from then on deathly afraid of lightning.

We used to plow right round an 80 - acre piece, the length of the furrows at the start being a mile and a half and taking something over a half hour to complete. The plowing order was based on age: Richard, then Howard, and lastly me. When a late-afternoon thunderstorm began to gather, I prayed that we would not make another round; but Richard rather gloried in such storms and we plowed right into them.

A flash, a boom and a dash of rain. A crash of lightning and thunder. No interval. Probably struck the nearby fence line. A play of blue light between the levers with the wet rumps of the wheelers as backdrop. Crash! I squirm in the iron seat. The air smells of ozone, and there is a taste of fear in the back of my mouth. Crash! Thank God for that last bolt, at the end of the round. Richard pulls out and starts to unhitch! But there is still a mile of wet road, between the fences and under the telephone-wires, before reaching the shelter of home.

No one everyknew of my awful fear. But through years of countless storms I beat it. The time came when I had the lead team — and made another round into the teeth of a crashing storm.

This was my greatest victory. I learned not to give in, and never again did I falter or show fear — until I had to face the ordeal of another phobia. But that will be dealt with in its place.

\* \* \*

In the early twenties Stavely, town and country together, was a self-sufficient unit that brought out the full potential of its people. The Stavely Agricultural Society put on annual fairs that would have put to shame the exhibits of later years in Calgary and Edmonton: the crops, the livestock, the cooking and needlework, the auto racing, the baseball, the barnstorming biplanes and, finally, the dance in Bruhn's Hall. Mountain Peak competed with Balfour, Prairie Dell, Harper and Pine Coulee schools for "The Shield". I spent days preparing grain sheaves and wild flower collections. We won three or four times, about an even split with Balfour, the main competitor.

We developed a golf course on the Fair Grounds, nine holes with sand (soil-drifted) greens. This made the third ancillary use of the Grounds, the second being a pasture for John Watson's cows.

I once played a round with Henry Tinker, one of our more interesting frontiersmen.

"This here course poses a problem", said Henry as we went to the second tee. "Ever' body's tellin' me about havin' to keep my eye on the ball. But Dag Nab it! You gotta look where you are walking' — in a cow pasture!"

This was the heyday of small towns. It ended in the thirties when new highways and better cars drew our people away to the shops and amenities of larger centers.

Singling-out Stavely's ruling passion of the time is easy — baseball. The Stavely team, with Slim Haynes pitching and Alex Alan catching, was the "best in the west". We beat the best Calgary teams, we won the Brewery Cup perennially. We were baseball crazy.

Of course Mountain Peak had a team, and the diamond and back-stop was in our pasture. There were bovine difficulties similar to those at the golf course, as will be attested by Archie Marshall — who slid into what he thought was third base! We played second-rate teams, such as Parkland, on better than even terms. I was on infielder, and in the one year that we kept averages, I batted .383. In view of the pitching, this isn't bragging. I was very agile, even acrobatic, as a shortstop; but I tended to spoil good fielding by high throws to first base. When I became manager, about 1925, I moved myself to third, which brought my trajectory into the first baseman's reach. Even so, I liked tall first basemen.

Of course, a fair share of our recreation related to The Hills and The Crick. There were small family picnics and large community ones at Willow Creek. The latter led to a well-developed picnic grounds at the swimming hole, now Willow Creek Provincial Park.

On the high level prairie at the entrance to the grounds, corrals and wild-horse chutes were built for bucking contests and other rodeo events. And around it all was a half-mile race track. The rodeo was very popular, drawing contestants from several ranches as well as some Indian reservations. It moved into town for the bigger sports days, vying with baseball as a stellar attraction.

Then there was berry picking — saskatoons and gooseberries in season. This went back to the earliest homestead days; but, even in the

twenties, Mother would put up some hundreds of quarts of saskatoons (with lemon "to make them tart").

There was very little dependence on entertainment from the outside. There were the films, of course, but that was only a couple of reels in a tin box, arriving once a week. The Chautauqua, however, was the real thing. It came to Bruhn's Hall for a three-day stand of six different shows. We always had seasons tickets. There were lectures, music, magic and science demonstrations. Well do I remember the astronomical show!

\* \* \*

The ladies, in particular, sometimes found Stavelly life rather quiet, perhaps ill-conducive to artistic expression, perhaps even uncultured. They didn't play ball nor curl and their golf was frustrating. Some played the piano though not as well as Chuck Clarke (bank teller and shortstop), who jangled well-known tunes at the Saturday night cinema. Their singing was pretty well confined to the church. The dance? Ah! thereby swings a tale.

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#### THE BIG DANCE RECITAL IN BRUHN'S HALL

Miss Maxwell, the pretty young dancing teacher that came down from Calgary once a week, was as versatile as she was svelte. She taught highland dancing to young girls, tap dancing to young boys (who had no sisters) and interpretive dancing to our matrons. Among the

latter, most were rather hefty housewives who needed exercise to conteract calories.

Instruction went on throughout the summer and fall, so it was after threshing by the time the pupils, great and small, were ready to perform in public recital.

The big night arrives and there is not an empty seat in the Hall. The stage is all fixed up to represent a clearing in a woodland, with the footlights (a string of bulbs) reflected inwards by a long tin gutter. Roy Jenkins (first baseman) is playing the violin with Chuck Clarke at the piano. Then a hush. And the curtains are pulled aside.

Miss Maxwell moves lightly to center stage and after a word of welcome introduces a pipe major from Calgary. There is a swirl of pipes in the rear and the piper strides down the center aisle, across the front to the stage steps, around the stage a couple of times and then takes a stand, just aside the wings, where he stays, immobile, for the rest of the show.

The young girls come on and do highland dances to the pipes. The boys follow with taps and jiggs to Jenkins and Clarke.

Our matrons, about 15 strong, now do a joyous song and dance, called The Farmerettes, around a wheat stook in center stage. They are in bright blue jeans, pink polkadot blouses, and such varied headress as straw hats, bonnets and red bandanas. They skip about brandishing rakes and forks and shovels. There is a vast difference in weight of foot, from the light fan<sup>d</sup>ango to the heavy stomp. We wonder if the boards will hold. But we love them, and The Farmerettes get a couple of curtain calls.

The grand finale contrasts with the familiar modernity of the prelude: it is of ancient Greece — classical. The curtains part revealing woodland spirits. They are obviously the erstwhile highland lassies now swirling visions in white. The Scot, now presumably Pan, pipes softly. The spirits melt away and the goddesses come on. They are dressed in filmy floating white with a suggestion of flowing tresses. They abandon themselves to the dance. Pan increases his volume to contend with resounding boards. It is now apparent who is the big star of the show. She is *does the more intricate gyrations and* always in the center and <sup>^</sup>glides. It is the hefty Mrs. F.S. (Mr. F.S. is the smallish, almost voiceless hardwareman, who is heard squeaking from the back of the Hall). Pan increases his tempo and Mrs. F.S. becomes cyclonic. Then the goddesses, like the spirits, melt away. It is time for Mrs. F.S.'s solo. She is announced as the Arcadian Ariel.

Pan pulls out all the stops. Mrs. F.S. takes a running leap from the wings. There is a splintering crash. Mrs. F.S. disappears into a wreckage of upended and splintered boards. A dust cloud gathers over the crater. The pipes emit sinking notes of doom. Mr. F.S. is making shrill, staccato squeaks in the background. Unaccountably, Miss Gwyer rushes onstage and with a short scream and a minor crash is also lost in the wreckage. Gabe Gwyer (the elevator man) sprints down the center aisle, leaps over the footlights and also disappears into the hole. Bits of splintered lumber erupt from the crater and rain down onstage. Mr. Gwyer emerges triumphant, bearing his sobbing daughter (an only child). Mr. F.S. remains motionless, still squeaking. Three strong men rush onstage and manage after a great heave-ho to extricate his wife. She emerges

sneezing and is escorted to the wings. The pipe major, who has been stationary throughout the show, now moves forward to draw the curtains — on the ruins of old Ardady.

(I hasten to add that no injuries sustained by Mrs. F.S. were of physical nature).

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Brief mention has been made already of Henry Tinker. He was a kind of cross-section of the pioneer west: homesteader, cowboy, prospector horse trader — and story teller. His tales were always based on fact; but they had to measure up to his standard, so were embellished and dramatized accordingly.

Like so many of the oldtimers in retirement, he liked to impress the younger generation and always had time to recount for us stories of the days when men were men. Probably we were his best listeners, for I can recall serious allegations by his fellow oldtimers to the effect that he stretched the truth and added fictions of his own. But to us he was indisputable.

He always called me Johnny, as will be seen in the following.

#### WILDHORSE WILLOUGHBY

Well, Johnny, I guess Willoughby's entry into Stavely was just about the most onpromisin' made by anybody into anyplace. I was holdin' up the sunny side of Irv Allen's liver' stable and garage, havin' a pull at my pipe, when I sees this tall and ganglin' feller approachin' on the Calgary road. He's on foot and leading a old sway-backed mare. His gait is pretty stiff and spread-out, but I guess walkin's the lesser of the two evils.

When he reaches the edge of town he stops and gits into the saddle, a operation which is both painful and time-consumin'. The old mare is fed up with it all and goes into a joltin' trot. Willoughby is all bent over and tryin' to sit on his hands. Then right in front of the liver' stable she stops up short and Willoughby sails over her head and lands in a pile at her feet. She snorts at him in disgust.

Well, Johnny, I rushes over to him, followed by Irv Allen. He just lays there gaspin'. His wallet is in the dust and open, exposin' a identity card. It says: Horace Wilde Willoughby, Something-or-other-upon-Something-else, Wilts. Well, them names, Horace Wilde, rings a bell in Irv's head, and right there and then he turns 'em round and names the stranger Wildhorse.

Well, Wildhorse is on his feet agin' before the dust has time to settle. A reel pleasant chap in a long lean sort of way. Says he's prospectin' for a homestead. He's a bit saddle-shy so he buys a buggy and single harness for the old mare. Then he heads west into the hills. Of course he can't resist them Alberta foothills and comes back and files on a quarter section with the crick runnin' through it. Then he settles at the Stavely Hotel, until the papers come through. Also he's buyin'-up machinery and barbwire and cows and such like.

Like I said, Johnny, Wildhorse is a likable chap, but he's so green that we can't help makin' a goat outa him. Agriculturely speakin', he helpless. He does ever'thing wrong, if at all. He can't harness a horse, hammer a nail, open a wire gate or dig a hole. And with him milkin' a cow is a deadly business.



Yes, Sir, we all had a good laugh at Wildhorse. We didn't have to play tricks on him. He sorta played 'em on himself. Like when he gits his box from England. Mostly it's fulla books and clothes. The ice-cream suit is the funniest, and them shiny leather boots which buckles just below the knee.

Did you ever hear tell of that chap in the pome, Johnny, which goes gallopin' and gallopin' about at night? Well, this is Wildhorse. When his saddle sores heals a bit he takes to practicing horseback ridin' at night. In the black of midnight when none can see.

Well, this kiddin' and ribbin' and jokin' at Wildhorse's expense goes on until Sports Day. Which is Stavely's way of celebratin' the First of July, Dominion Day.

Them Stavely Sports Days is all the same: foot races and jumps for kids and grown-ups, the baseball game with Claresholm, the buckin' contest, and the dance in the evenin'. This time it's a fine day and there's a big crowd, and the three-piece band is a-marchin' and a-playin' like they never done before.

Wildhorse has the reel First-of-July spirit. He'll try anything. And he dresses special for whatever he is in. For the races and jumps he comes out in short white pants and undershirt. He wins just about ever'thing. Includin' the tossin' of a big fence post with Scotty Campbell.

Well, sir, Wildhorse is fast becomin' a hero with the crowd. This is not agriculture and he can do anything. So when Mike Chessman, the harnessmaker and manager of the Stavely ball team, finds he has a sick outfielder he naturally approaches Wildhorse. The flush of success and the cheers of the crowd is on Wildhorse and he agrees to play his first baseball game.

He beats it over to the Hotel and comes back all decked out in long pants, V-neck sweater, cap and padded gloves. Ever'thing is pure white except the cap which has red and white stripes. And he is a sensation! When Claresholm is battin', he is gallopin' all over the outfield catchin' balls — with his bare hands! And, you won't believe this, Johnny, when he comes to bat he puts his gloves on! Ever'body jeers at him. But he has a reel talent for buntin' fast grounders where the fielders ain't. The Stavely fans goes wild and takes him to their hearts.

Then comes the big event of the day, Johnny. The buckin' contest. I'd promised to help with the saddlin' in the chute, so I moseys over to the corrals where I finds Irv Allen, who is in charge of the contest. He's puttin' the broncho's names in his big ten-gallon Stetson so the cowboys can draw their horses.

"Where's Wildhorse, Henry?" Irv asks. "That boy is sure makin' a name for himself. Wonder if he'd ride a broncho? Mebbe we could find a easy one."

"Not that easy," I says. "There is one thing Wildhorse can't do. and that's settin' on a horse — if it moves."

Just then Wildhorse himself ambles up followed by most of Stavely's younger generation.

Irv pokes the big Stetson at him.

"Want to draw for a horse, Wildhorse?"

A shout goes up from the youngsters, appealin' to Wildhorse. Well, the flush of success has numbed his brain and he reaches into the hat.

As he drewed out the slip of paper I sees the name on it.

"Jumpin' Jehoshaphat!" I exclaims.

"Eh," says Wildhorse, lookin' at me.

"The name of your horse, Jumpin' Jehoshaphat. J.J. for short.

The prize buckner from the Bar U. Throved ever' cowboy that's ever boarded him. Inside ten seconds!"

Wildhorse just looks determined.

"I need a change of clothes," he says.

This time he comes back from the hotel in a black short-sleeved shirt and white pants which is tucked into them shiny, knee-high boots.

Well, the buckin' contest gits under way. You know our system, Johnny? Well, we keeps the buckers in a small corral, herd'em one-at-a-time into the squeezer chute for saddlin' and mountin', then let 'em outa the chute and into the big corral where they does their stuff. So, we gits the first broncho into the chute. It's Lightin', a wild stallion. Wes Conners, lookin' bowlegged in his long-haired chaps, comes over to the chute, draggin' his saddle. This he throws to the top of the chute and follows it, climbin' the plank sides like a ladder. Wes stands spread-legged on the top planks while the saddle is put on. This is my job. Gittin' the girth around Lightin's quiverin' belly and cinchin' it up tight. I works on the left side, with Gabe Gwyer, the elevator man, helpin' on the other side. When ever'thing is ready we takes the stirrups down from the horn. This is the signal for Wes to let himself down into the saddle. Then the bars is pulled away and Lightin' plunges out into the big corral, with Wes aboard.

There is Wes Conners on Lightin', Billy Brand on Midnight, Chuck Parker on Gravedigger, and so on. And so off. Most of the cowboys don't

stay on the required ten seconds. The wranglers herd the bronchos, still buckin' at their empty saddles, through a gate and into another small corral.

Wildhorse Willoughby is last because J.J. is so mean that the wranglers can't git him into the chute. But at last they does. When I cinches up J.J. his back goes up like a rainbow, which is a bad sign. Well, Wildhorse comes down into the saddle and me and Gabe guides them shiny boots into the stirrups. He don't set in a easy slump like the cowboys. He's like a ramrod, chin up, determination all over him. Poor chap! He's been ridin' high all day — when no horses was concerned. Now he's ridin' for a big fall. I shore wanted to help him ride J.J.

Irv Allen, who has a voice like a herd of hoarse buffaloes, is doin' the announcin'.

"Wildhorse Willoughby comin' out on Jumpin' Jehoshophat," he bellows.

J.J. shoots outa the chute in a long leap and comes down stiff-legged. Wildhorse gits a awful jolt. His legs seem to get longer and the rest of him shorter. Like he's bein' cut in two. But he's still in the saddle.

"Ride'im, cowboy," roars the crowd.

J.J. is up in the air agin', and comin' down. This time he twists sideways and lands with his head coiled between his stiff forelegs. And Wildhorse stays with him. The crowd roars. This is buckin' and ridin' like they never seen before. To me it's like splittin' a log. J.J.'s the sledge, the saddle's the wedge, and Wildhorse is the log. If only he can stay on for ten seconds, and in one piece!

Well, Johnny, J.J. tries all his tricks; but somehow Wildhorse sticks with him. The ten-second whistle blows just as J.J. is comin' down from one of his long leaps in a stiff-legged landing'. But Wildhorse keeps on goin' like he's a shot from the saddle. And comes back to earth in a cloud of dust. He gits up and watches the wranglers chasing J.J.

The crowd is hushed as the judges put their heads together. Irv Allen holds up his hand.

"The last ride qualifies."

The crowd roars.

Irv bellows for attention and the crowd quiets down.

He continues to bellow.

"Ladies and Gentlemen. The winnah of the Annual Stavely Buckin' Contest is that remarkable and very pop'lar newcomer to our midst, Wildhorse Willoughby!"

The crowd goes wild.

It's shore been a great day for that ganglin' green Englishman!

Next day I was havin' a friendly pipe with Gabe Gwyer and Mike Chessman in Mike's harness shop, when in comes Wildhorse Willoughby carrying his shiny high-topped boots. He's walkin' pretty stiff.

"Are you ever a hero!" Irv greets him. "How do you feel, lad?"

"Well, I don't set comfortable," says Wildhorse. "And my back teeth hurts. But look at these boots. You repair 'em, don't you? Well, the straps that goes round the tops need fixin'."

While Mike looks at the straps, me and Gabe exchanges looks of our own, knowin' looks.

Wildhorse hauls a couple of broken straps outa his pocket.

"Broke both of 'em when I rode J.J. yesterday," he says. "Some blighters buckled 'em onto my bloomin' saddle girth!"

## CHAPTER 9. HIGHER, HIGHER, HIGHER

This title, which may suggest Longfellow's Excelsior!, is much less lofty. It denotes not physical altitudes but upward gradations of education.

Having, officially, a grade seven standing at age twenty, there was no way to go but up.

But before ascending the academic ladder, it will be useful to note a few circumstances, relating to ways and means, that put my feet on the lower rungs.

In December, 1921, Richard went off to the South Seas (Samoa) as a Mormon missionary. He had joined the Latter Day Saints a couple of years before, with the blessings of the rest of us but without our conversion. This raised me a notch in family responsibility and I became indeed a full-time farmer — and in the sense of what a farmer considers to be full-time.

The next fall Dad let me take a team and bundle rack to go threshing. I worked with Malchow's big outfit: Case engine, 48-inch Minneapolis separator and Stewart sheaf loader. Actually, I exchanged my rack for a special one, because with a sheaf loader one side had to be low (next the loader) and the other high. It was easy to load but the disordered sheaves made for difficult pitching at the feeder. It was a long dry fall after a pretty dry crop season. The important point is that I drew a man's wage and that the money was mine to spend as I liked.

The one jarring note on these big outfits was the I.W.W. (Independent Workers of the World) who tried to agitate the men into a strike. In my experience he was usually Irish and always unsuccessful.

That winter I began to build a library, most of which I still retain.

The memorable thing about 1923 is that we were hauled-out, 100 percent and no insurance. And bumper crops all around us. We cut and stacked our wheat for feed, and fed about a hundred range cattle. I went threshing again (Carl Carlson, Rumley engine and 46<sup>-inch</sup> Rumley Ideal separator) and made enough money to buy a radio, to which I later added an amplifier and loud speaker.

In the spring of 1924 Richard returned from Samoa and Dad arranged for the purchase of the Jim McAlpine half, two miles south. Crops were excellent. In the fall I went threshing again, this time as a spike-pitcher with Henry Hafner's outfit, Allis-Chalmers (gasoline) engine and 42-inch Red River Special separator. My job, which paid an extra dollar a day, was to pitch bundles into the feeder, helping the teamsters to unload. In a 12 hour day I would pitch off about two-thirds of up to 120 loads. At 19 I was an eager beaver. I would jump off a rack just emptied, make a sweep with my fork to pick up loose straw under the feeder, rush back to the approaching load, scale the back of the rack, and throw a bundle into the feeder extension as soon as we were within range. I exulted in my work, except when a cross wind gave me the dirty side and the boss refused to re-set.

The boss, Henry Haffner, the fattest man in southern Alberta, beamed on me — and my fellow eager beaver, Cameron Wallace. It was a completely Seventh-Day Adventist outfit (except for me) so we rested on Saturday and worked on Sunday.

Cameron and I became fast friends. He planned to use his wages

for a term at the Canadian Junior College, an Adventist school at Lacombe, Alberta (College Heights post office). I decided to do likewise, at least for a half term.

\* \* \*

On Tuesday, November 4, 1924, I <sup>a</sup>boarded the morning train for Lacombe, via Calgary. I remember my thoughts, sitting between Mother and Dad in the waiting room with the telegraph clicking unattended dashes and dots in the next room. It would be my first train ride, the first time I would be more than 35 miles from home (the previous record was a ball game at Vulcan), I would not see my folks again until Christmas. An old friend of our family, Clarence Davis, came in and bought a ticket to Calgary — and I lost my tenseness. On the train, Clarence and I talked about the American presidential election (taking place that day) and about the Prince of Wales.

In Calgary, I was met by my Lone Scout letter-pal, Eli DeFrain, who took me to see The Dumbells (Al and Merton Plunkett, Red Newman, Ross Hamilton, etc.) at the Grand Theatre. I was also fascinated by the electric street cars, the first I had ever seen.

Arriving in Lacombe about nine o'clock, I was met by Cameron Wallace and driven, with baggage, to the College on a hill some two miles away. There I was installed as Cameron's room-mate in No. 14 of the boys' dormitory, West Hall. (The girls were in East Hall).

I registered next morning in the academic course (the alternative was ministerial), which for me included Latin, Old Testament History, English and Piano. And the self-sufficiency of the college was explained



to me. Students were required to work for the establishment several hours a week. Being a late arrival, there was little choice for me: I was to work in the printing shop and "mow back" in the coal bin. The latter is memorable for its great size and for the access it gave to a grocery storage — which was mildly pilfered on occasion, when Matron Susie Wagner wasn't there to see.

Let me say right off that I respected the College, its objectives and all concerned, that my misdemeanors came from English schoolboy stories and my efforts to emulate such culprits as Jack Harkaway and Dick Harvey.

The non-sabbath day's schedule ran about as follows: up at 6:30, breakfast at 7:00 (grace by singing "Praise God from whom all blessings flow. . .") A period in the classroom, before Chapel at 9:00. Back to studies at 10:00 . In the afternoons I had a bit of piano and a rather large stint in printing or binning. In the evenings we had meetings of mission bands. I chose Africa, and found the discussions very interesting.

Saturday was for rest and religion.

When I met with imposed discipline, such as pulling the light switch at 10:00 p.m., my behavioral guide-line was, to<sup>o</sup><sub>A</sub> often, what would Jack Harkaway have done? In this I was joined by Cameron and some others (notably Earl Clemensen, son of the President of the B.C. Conference). We escaped by rope from our second floor window and hiked in the moonlight to nearby Lake Barnett. Or, we forgathered in a lighted basement room of the Administration Building for boxing, wrestling and general horseplay. Or, if we stayed in-Hall, we went to one of the guest rooms, seldom occupied and always with lights, for a quiet hour's reading. There was an

element of danger in this flouting of authority, producing <sup>l</sup>midly-spiced adventure.

Cameron, Earl and I were eventually caught near midnight in a guest room. The two former were reading a stack of forbidden comic papers; I was reading The Call of the Wild by Jack London. We called on President Klooster next day, and had our exuberant energies channelled into extra amounts of manual labor.

But, in the really big adventure of that term, I was not the culprit but the hero.

Any climatically-minded old timer will tell you th<sup>at</sup> December 1924 was by far the coldest month on record. It was -45 at Calgary, -58 at Lacombe. At College Heights our livestock were starving. We had been waiting for moderation in the weather before bringing feed (green oat sheaves) from our farm four and a half miles away. There was no moderation, so the President, in chapel, asked for four volunteers to man two bundle-rack sleighs for an immediate nine-mile mercy mission. It was 45 below.

Cameron and I all but <sup>r</sup>interrupted President Klooster to get our names down. So did Percy Foote, a little Englishman, and Nels Dahl, a big Dane. We rushed to West Hall to get dressed as warmly as possible. Others rushed to the barns to prepare the horses and the vehicles.

Shortly after ten we were on our way. Some two hours later we were loaded; but in turning into the road home Cameron and I upset our rack. Percy and Nels went on. Our trouble was that the 2 x 10 bed pieces of the rack converged almost to a point in front (for easy wagon turning). The space between the bed pieces and the bolster uprights should have been blocked. Without blocking our rack had slid to one side, and with the load weight, upset.

There was a logging chain on the back of the rack and with this I undertook to chain the bedpieces securely to the bolster. Then we reloaded, or rather Cameron did for my hands were frozen — like two solid hooks. About half-way home my feet began to freeze and I walked behind the rack, my feet had been enclosed in gunny sacks tied below the knees. The sacks loosened with walking and I hooked my hands into them to hold them up. My wrists and face were freezing.

When we got back to the College it was still 40 below. I was taken to the Laundry and ministered to over a tubful of snow. I was put to bed and lunch was brought to me. The School forgot my unscathed companions — and I was the hero of the day. My hands and feet were painful but not beyond saving. I lost some tissue from face and wrists, and on the latter carry scars to the present day.

At Christmas, I returned home. I was very happy. But Mother had bobbed her hair!

\* \* \*

That was an eventful Christmas. Scarlet fever and diphtheria had struck in Stavely. Little Barbara Jenkins was stricken and we took-in the still small<sup>er</sup> "Brother" Jenkins as a matter of isolation. My sister May came down with scarlet fever, and Richard and I moved to Chaney's. (They were relatives of Phil Lavergne, who had died in 1922). The day before I was to return to Lacombe I developed scarlet fever and went back home. There were complications, and I ended-up with permanent loss of hearing in the left ear. Little Barbara Jenkins died.

My trunk with all my belongings, including boxing gloves, was sent down from Lacombe. And there was a nice letter from staff and students.

Looking back now after nearly a half century, friends not already mentioned that come readily to mind are: Ellen Mabley, Jesse Payne, O.W. Reirmuth (Latin) and Bryan Sargeant.

Quarantine ended and I was back in circulation by February. However, one of my complications (besides the ear) persisted. This was a severe case of threadworm piles that developed when I was sloughing skin. The itching was terrible and the scratching had to be done in private — as in the barn. And on the stable medicine shelf was a bottle of Hanford's Balsam of Myrrh, Dad's favorite horse liniment. Applied to my piles it was exquisitely painful for about 15 minutes, but relieved the itching for upwards of half an hour — a favorable percentage. So I took to carrying a pocket flask of this counter irritant, with a cotton wool applicator.

My first post-convalescent appearance in public was at a big dance in Bruhn's Hall. All my friends said I was looking well, considering, and hoped I was strong enough to dance. I was not my usual smooth self during the opening waltz (with Ruth Stanford), being hyperitchy and jumpy. Observers no doubt felt that scarlet fever had left me more or less an empty shell of a youth.

Well, between dances I went to the men's room with my Myrrh. I came out, jet-propelled, just as the band struck up a fast foxtrot. One of the town matrons (I think it was the classical Mrs. F.S.) was in my path and presumably wanting to dance. I swept her away. Now, no doubt, all observers wondered anew. My performance in putting hefty Mrs. F.S. through her paces broke all lap records for that dance floor. Only her weight kept my feet on the floor.

It was a phenomenally successful return. The orchestra played something slower — and compatible with a wearing-off of my stimulant. Then

a waltz and I was old smoothy again. That was their cycle: fast, slower, slow. After the waltz I visited the men's room, and came out in high gear. In modern parlance, I had myself a ball!

\* \* \*

The summer of 1925 was most eventful, and I will recount the exceptional happenings in chronological order.

First Dad bought me a "mechanics special", a 1918 Model T that had to be towed home. It cost \$25.00, "as is". Well, the old Lizzie needed a lot done to her but I found nearly all the parts (gaskets, shims, babbitt, etc.) and all of the tools, necessary for her overhaul right on the farm. She was soon running — and I was buying gasoline, a gallon at a time.

In June I treated Mabel and Floyd Florence to a trip to Claresholm, where I picked up Edna Schoemaker — my very first real date! We all went to the Saturday-night movie at the Rex Theatre. Then we got separated. Later Mable and Floyd were "looking for us, everywhere". (They should have looked on the front steps of the Catholic church). Finally, deciding we had gone home with some of Edna's numerous relatives, neighbors of ours, they drove off in Lizzie. At about the same moment we began looking for my car. The stores had closed, and the streets were empty — except for old Dan Macleod, our one-eyed town drunk. He insisted on helping us look.

The R.C.M.P. Corporal accosted us, asking our ages. Edna was 16, I was 19. Despite Dan's passionate pleas, we were apprehended under the curfew by-law and taken to the upstairs sitting room of the Queen's Hotel. I asked to use the telephone, to have McAllister of Claresholm Garage to take us home.

"What makes you think that you're going home tonight?" growled the Corporal. "You are under arrest!"

When we were sufficiently scared the Corporal let me call McAllister. I took Edna home and then stopped at Richard's, to save taxi fare.

The Corporal phoned Dad next morning. Dad delivered the required reprimand grinning all over his face.

Well, anyway, it was rather a remarkable first date!

Having the mobility that came with a car of my own led to other firsts. A first trip to Macleod, where there was a big celebration with lots of Indians, and where I saw Charlie King killed by a bucking horse. Then a first trip, by car, to Calgary.

Howard and I were to spend a whole week attending the Calgary Jubilee and Stampede, camping on St. George's Island, in the Bow. Up at dawn of a Monday, we followed the Blue Line Trail, guided by blue bands painted on telephone poles. I was driving. We had instructions on how to get to the Island by turning right after we passed the Brewery. But somehow we got into traffic with all exits blocked.

In fact we were in the big parade, for all to see. Floats in front of us, bands behind us! Howard sat in a stoney state of shock, but I was able to acknowledge, by a timid and palsied hand, such cheers as came our way.

The parade finally dispersed, and we got a close-up view of Hoot Gibson. Then with many concrete refutations of the statement, "you can't miss it," we made our way to St. George's Island. It was then a place of unspoiled nature, and we had a beautiful camp at the water's edge. We never moved the car again until the homeward journey early Sunday morning.

We went by streetcar to Victoria Park, the Stampede grounds. It was a good show. The best broncho busting we had ever seen. And, of course, there was Hoot. Just seeing him was enough. So when he rode two horses, standing up, our joy was unbounded. Almost unnoticed was the official guest of the Stampede, Field Marshall Earl Douglas Haig.

The fate of the Flivver should be mentioned. I sold it for \$40 in May 1926 to Richard's hired man, payments to be withheld from wages. The scoundrel absconded with the car in June, leaving me completely unpaid, and embezzling over a hundred dollars collected from the sale of Elks Carnival tickets.

Crops were good and Dad bought a 22-inch Wood Bros. "Humming Bird" separator to go with our Fordson. Richard "ran both ends". It was a small outfit, but we were independent and, with Uncle Pete with us again we could run it with only one hired man.

But it was slow-going, and that is the reason that I was three weeks late at C.S.A.

\* \* \*

My first contact with the Claresholm School of Agriculture (opened in 1913) was in 1916 when early in May each pupil at Mountain Peak received packets of vegetable and flower seeds, and some seed potatoes. And each family got a setting of six chicken eggs. From these we produced our "school" gardens and flocks. In September we exhibited our produce at the School Fair, C.S.A. Our family won a fair share of prizes.

During the summer of 1920, I was selected to guide the then C.S.A. Principal, J. C. Hooper, to the farm homes of participating students from

Mountain Peak, Prairie Dell, Balfour and Harper schools. I was very proud of my role as guide, especially as Mr. Hooper permitted me to make the first contact and, when it seemed proper, to introduce him. He would then inspect the pupil's gardens, making suggestions and, with some exceptions, offer his congratulations. It was all very gratifying to everyone concerned.

Then came November 1925, when I enrolled as a first-year student at C.S.A. It was Sunday (the 22nd, I think) and I was installed in Mrs. Callahan's boarding house, which was managed by her widowed daughter, Mrs. Eva Anderson. There were two double beds in my room: one was shared by Owen Stringham (Glenwoodville) and Glen Hanson (Aetna); the other was occupied by A.J. (Art) Kindt (Nanton), at the moment absent, and I was to be his bedfellow.

Glen and Owen and, of course I, went to bed early. Glen had put some paper in the overhead light socket so the bulb wouldn't light-up. Kindt came in about ten, puffing after his walk from the station. He clicked at the light switch, swore under his breath, walked all over me in bed trying to get at the socket, growled at me for the bad footing I made, and finally illuminated the scene.

Art, a heavy man in his mid-twenties, was immediately affable the moment the light came on. He was known as "Puss" or "Major Hoople". He played the trombone and loved to impress (and to shock) us with big words and resounding phrases. On the very next day, in some flimsy<sup>5</sup> context he asserted: "Strong sexual desire on the part of the human male is not a mark of total depravity; it merely shows that he is a seeker for a fuller, higher, and more abundant life." He had great human qualities and became a lifelong friend.



Because of my late arrival, I missed the ordeal of initiation. However, in my second year I helped to inflict these tortures on incoming freshmen.

The five-month course at C.S.A. included Agronomy (E.G. Bayfield); Animal Husbandry and Farm Management (W.M. Cockburn); Mechanics, Carpentry and Blacksmithing (W.J. Welker); Veterinarian Science (C.E. Buchanan); Irrigation (E.E. Eisenhaur); Science (Principal S.H. Gandier); Mathematics, English, Public Speaking and Debating (W.S. Benn). Our instructors were all first class. The student body included first and second year girls and boys, and J.G. Clark's "British boys". The latter were selected in Britain and brought to Alberta and trained for one term at the expense of the Provincial Department of Agriculture. Their backgrounds varied (London cockney to Cambridge graduate), but not their lively good fellowship, and they added tremendously to our sports and social activities. All in all, C.S.A. lives in memory as my favorite school.

Our Saturday night dances (preceeded by second-year student debates, minstrel shows, the reading of our Tatler, etc.) was the greatest social event in town. Our British-Canadian orchestra was the best (Moonlight and Roses, Barney Google, I Miss My Swiss, and Yes, We Have No Bananas). The elite of Claresholm's younger set were happy to have entry into our midst.

Barring inclemencies such as a blizzard, I ran home (9 1/2 miles) each Sunday morning, to be driven <sup>back</sup> ~~home~~ at night.

This weekly jogging kept me in trim for hockey and the sports meets. However, I was not a distance runner; my specialty was the quarter mile, which I could do in 50 seconds in tennis shoes. My main claim to fame came in the fall meet of 1926.

On this occasion we had a noon meal of steak and onions. As athletes, the other boarders at Callahan's rejected the steaks and went in for raw-eggs and similar unfilling vittles. As a result I had a triple helping of steaks. My downfall was freely predicted. But I did win the 440 against first-year and British competition. The big event, of course, was the mile relay, and I was anchor-man. The first year had a fine team and when I got the baton their anchor, Swarbrick, had a lead of about 30 yards. I sprinted to overhaul his lead and beat him out at the tape. The Claresholm and Lethbridge papers reported this as the highlight of the meet. My motto became: more meat makes for more muscle at the meet.

Art Kindt was a "two-in-one" man, that is, as a high school graduate he concentrated on strictly agricultural courses and got his diploma in one year. In my second year Art Paul (Lomond) became my bedfellow at Callahan's — and my lifelong friend.

One incident should be enlarged upon (it was mentioned briefly, by Swindlehurst in his History of the Agricultural Schools).

It had been a good saskatoon year and, as usual, Mother quit canning at about the 100-quart mark and made the remaining berries into juice. This filled about a dozen gallon jugs. And Dad, as usual, secretly uncapped some of them to add a few raisins. One Sunday as I was returning to school Mother decided that I should have some saskatoon juice in my room. I took two gallons, one of which found its way into storage in my locker in the chemistry Lab at the School. The jug in my room proved innocuous; but the other, unknown to me, had Dad's secret mark upon it.

One cold winter's evening several students were in the Lab doing mechanical drawing. The tedium of this work made me restless — and I was

reminded of the jug. I gathered a sufficient number of 400 c.c. beakers and announced that the drinks were on me. Sampling the brew some shuddered, some smiled, and all became flushed. There was a second round, and a third. Art Paul and Bob Hammond were inclined to slap me on the back and call me "Old Pal, old Pal!" Chief Joe Pete One Owl (Piegan Reserve, Brocket) sat himself glumly in a corner. Newt, our mountaineer from Fishburn, who had never spoken an idle word in two years, now took the floor. He told a couple of tall stories of the wilder west, recounted a most improbable personal experience, and abandoned himself to a wild dance that is quite indescribable. He then subsided into a silence (from which he never again emerged) and went to sit in heavy solemnity with Chief Joe Pete One Owl.

I told Mother that her saskatoon wine had been most refreshing and much appreciated.

My second year at C.S.A. was very successful. I was first in the Senior Class and won several prizes. My main motivation was that outstanding students might be admitted to the University (with the proviso that matriculation be completed before entry into the final year). One of my qualifications for success was my photographic memory, which I discovered and exploited in my senior year.

And, finally, I divulge my nickname at C.S.A. It was Wendy. It came from a question I often asked at Callahan's boarding house, "When do we (Wendy) eat?"

\* \* \*

I went up to the University of Alberta in September, 1927. I was installed in Room 13, Assiniboia Hall, sharing an "alley" with two old C.S.A. friends, Art Paul and Gerry Burke. (Two others, Art Kindt and Fred Davies, lived out of residence). Board and room was \$37.00 per month.

For about ten days, all else was overshadowed by initiation.  
It was fiendish!

Initiation of University of Alberta is now only of historical interest since it has been banned since the thirties. It had led to permanent injuries, both physical and mental — and to at least one death.

I will describe some of the ordeals, which were either administered to me as a Freshman or by me as a Sophomore. First there was the hazing, imposing of tasks and rituals, not frightening but disagreeable and ignominious. As Frosh 280 I warmed "the bog" (toilet seat) for many a Soph, and for having my skullcap aslant on my bib askew I took cold showers by the dozen. ~~Our~~ regalia was, of course, in green and gold.

Perhaps the most successful ordeal year after year, was the life-net jump. As a preliminary each Frosh jumped from the gallery of the Upper Gym in Athabasca<sup>c</sup> Hall, a descent of some eight feet. The Frosh was then blindfolded and taken to the "roof". You went up stairs, you felt the parapet, and the cool night air. There were shouts from your escorts to those fifty feet below.

"Hey, you fellows quit fooling with that net. You've got to be serious or there will be another injury — even a fatality!"

And to you, the victim.

"Now, Frosh, up on the parapet and be ready for my signal. Jump way out, clear of the building (Hey, you silly asses, get that net off the ground. Do you want to kill the guy!) Ready, Frosh. Jump!"

You jumped, way out, to sprawl flat on the floor. The blindfold was removed and you saw yourself in the big open doorway and, behind you, a foot - high row of building blocks!

Then there was the Aggie's favorite — the stunt of the starving chickens. It was night-time in the Upper Gym, long past feeding-time for dozens of caged cockerals, and bared-belly time for blindfolded Frosh. Each victim in turn was held down by Sophs, his lower midriff exposed and well-plastered with bran mash and sprinkled with wheat seed. Then a famished chicken was loosed upon him. Peck, peck; scratch, scratch; cockle cockle. And the screams and curses of Frosh. Until the bird, sated, desisted.

Initiation ran a two-week course; but trickery and horsing had no limits, neither in time nor, indeed, in ingenuity. Female impersonators in Athabasca. Hangings from the High Level Bridge. A mortal struggle in the turrets of St. Steve's and the vanquished (actually a substituted dummy) heaved over the breastwork to the stones below. A headline in the dailies: Police Find Human Hand. . . . (supplied by Med students) Search for Dismembered Body.

And V.D. tests in St. Joe's. Belated but "Official" requirement for all Frosh. "Medical" man in lab coat and stethoscope. Urine sample in beaker (negative V.D., no reaction; positive V.D., violent effervescent). Most beakers prepared with a measure of common salt, but special ones with Eno's Fruit Salts. Great consternation of victim and professions of a clean and blameless life! And great fun!

\* \* \*

Well, in due course, we did get down to work.

I had registered in First Year Agriculture (fees, \$50.00). The University was still in its pioneer stage and my instructors, then but men of the hour, have since become historic figures. Lewis and Moss (Botany),

Lehmann, Stover, Walker and Boomer (Chemistry), Allan, Warren and Rutherford (Geology), Sheldon (Mathematics), Cassels (Political Economy), Rowan (Zoology). There was also Howes, the Dean of Agriculture, and his staff: Mac Gregor Smith (Ag. Engineering), Sackville and Sinclair (Animal Husbandry), Marker and Thornton (Dairying), Strickland (Entomology), Newton, Aamodt, Fryer and Henry (Field Crops), Harcourt (Horticulture), Wyatt and Newton (Soils).

In the above, I have encroached somewhat into the upper years. And I have missed the Department of English for my one and only teacher was a graduate student, G.B. Riddlehough, who in his transience was denied historic fame.

President H.M. Torrey was most approachable and on many occasions gave me a lift in his car. The first of the latter came during my initiation when I was required to find a blacksmith and bring back an old horseshoe. The President left me expostulating with the blacksmith — and the eventual horseshoe exorcised for many years any ill-luck that might otherwise have emanated from number 13, <sup>Assiniboia</sup> ~~Assiniboia~~ Hall.

In my third year (when I lived at Chisholm's on 83 Avenue — with Art Kindt and George Robertson as room-mates ) my fellow pedestrian on many occasions was The Hon. A. C. Rutherford, first Premier of the Province and at that time Chancellor of the University. His residence was at the corner of 112 Street and Saskatchewan Drive and his law office on Whyte Avenue. He was a rather heavy elderly man and we walked sedately. Conversation ran mainly on the University, Canadian history and books generally. He was very kind to me at the 1931 Convocation (in Mac Dougal Church).

I didn't have any great moments as an athlete at the University although I participated in boxing, hockey and track. In the summer of 1928 I trained faithfully for the quarter mile but was defeated by dysentery,

being eight pounds underweight at the time of the track meet. My main distinction athletically was being selected as assistant boxing instructor by Dr. George W. Hardy and Dr. Taylor. I was also a member of Miles Palmer's boxing school, (St. Joseph's).

Academically, however, I distinguished myself by making high marks with a minimum of effort. My gift of a photographic memory was now fully exploited. I attended every lecture (never missed in nine years of University) and took careful and effectively compedious notes. As soon as possible after a lecture I worked on the notes with several colored pencils. The material was organized into main headings and several orders of sub-heading, each of a different color. Diagrams received several colors and tabular material was tinted variously in both rows and columns. And the texbooks got something of the same treatment. By the dinner hour I was finished. I never worked in the evening and was the object of dire predictions respecting "exams".

As a matter of fact, a few hours of intense preparation prior to an examination put me in the enviable position where it was quite immaterial whether I took my notes and books to the writing — or left them at home. One of my favorite professors, and life-long friend, Dr. A.W. Henry, called me to his office after an exam. He looked worried. I had accurately reproduced a table of about fifty three - digit entries upon which I based an answer (in plant pathology), and he delicately raised the question of cheating. Even though a couple days had elapsed, I was able to reproduce the table with high accuracy — much to his relief.

Although fulfilling all examination requirements, I was cheating — myself. Having made the admission of this dubious practice, I hasten to add

that in my final undergraduate year, and all of my five postgraduate years, I deliberately minimized the use of this gift — though it was rather persistent in intruding itself in spite of my honorable intentions.



## CHAPTER 10. GRADUATE STUDENT

I might have entitled this chapter, "And Still Higher"; but I rejected it on the basis that my further higher education involved a descent — into depression.

My last year at home was in the summer of 1930. It stands out in memory because it represents the end of a personal era. We ~~were~~ more mobile now and there were visits to the Turner Valley oilfield and to Banff and Lake Louise. But mainly there was farming and boxing.

Farming had changed rapidly in the last five years. Dad had bought heavier, tractor machinery: three-bottom plows, 12-foot double discs, etc. But we still had our 20 horses and could field two eight-horse teams (four and four ~~tandem~~). So until 1928 I drove eight horses. Then we got a Rumley Oilpull, W Type, lightweight tractor. This had a two-cylinder kerosene-and-water engine. You started it on gasoline (by a bar pull on the left flywheel), then switched over to kerosene, gradually admixing water as it heated up. It was a slow-motion type, easily maintained (I changed the oil and checked the bearings every Sunday). I spent the summer on it in 1930.

The boxing bit centered on a young Montreal middleweight named Cliff Sowery.

Cliff had had a couple of successful bouts in southern Alberta and then got a job in the beer parlor of the Stavely Hotel. He set up training quarters in a vacant livery stable and I, a University amateur boxer and instructor, paid him a visit.

We were of the same weight (160 pounds) and of equal skill. He let me take charge of his training and even accepted my insistence on road

work. And I was in his corner one hot July night in Bruhn's Hall when he won the Middleweight Championship of Western Canada from Baden Whiteside of Penhold.

My association with Cliff Sowery dissuaded me from any further thoughts of becoming a professional pugilist. In our training and exhibition bouts, some very hotly contested, I was able to hold my own. But I lacked his determination to win, his killer instinct. He was a real "pro", I was not. Many years after I heard of Cliff's activities with boys' clubs in Montreal.

\* \* \*

I graduated from the University of Alberta in May 1931, with the degree of Bachelor of Science, and immediately took up graduate studies under a National Research Council bursary. I was housed in the West Laboratory and Dr. O. S. Aamodt was my mentor. My thesis involved a correlative genetic study on smut resistance and morphological characters in oats. I also took charge of all operational details in the oat program in the Faculty of Agriculture.

A young Englishman and fellow graduate, Geoffrey Watts Padwick now became my closest friend. He was studying under Dr. A. W. Henry, also in West Lab. We roomed together first in the White household, 11146-89th Avenue, near the Tuck Shop and later with the MacKerchers 11124 - 88th Avenue. In our final summer (1933) we saved money for our ensuing doctorate studies by tenting in the woods north-east of the Gridiron. Actually, it was a blind. We borrowed the tent and camp beds from Dr. Alf Leahey of the soil survey (only partially active because of the depression) and made a show of

setting up outdoor housekeeping. But we lived in fact in West Lab, at least to the extent of sleeping and cooking breakfast (at a very early hour). Occasionally I went out to the camp to inspect the tent and to light a fire for providing fresh embers in our ring of stones, just in case of possible ~~sc~~<sup>r</sup>utiny by suspicious officials.

For diversion we joined the Garneau Community League for tennis and dancing. Geoff was much better at the former, while I may have excelled in the latter. Occasionally we went to the Princess Theatre (admission reduced, in summer, from 25¢ to 20¢). During a long evening in the lab, I would often get a message, shouted or by 'phone, like, "douse your lights and keep an eye on third floor". This referred to Pembina Hall (girls' residence) and to the well-lighted and near-nude indiscretions of some unsuspecting female.

My graduate years at Alberta may be summed-up in terms of hard work, well-defined purpose, great expectations, good fellowship and unfailing high spirits. In addition to Geoff, I was on exceedingly friendly terms with the other West Labbers, Walter Johnston, Tom Kilduff and Fred Davies.

In the spring of 1932 I was back in boxing, this time as sparring partner to the amateur middleweight champion of Canada, Louis Lavoie, who was preparing for the IX Olympiad at Los Angeles. Louis was a tough, stocky man who excelled in infighting but who could be kept at long range, and thus ineffective, by a long fast left jab. Being over six feet tall, I had become very proficient with this latter weapon and so, with Benny Tait (brother of Clonie Tait Canadian lightweight champion — professional), I became a regular spar mate. I boxed exhibitions with both Louis and Benny to raise expense money. Louis gave a good account of himself at Los Angeles, but he did not bring back a medal.

Of course, many amusing incidents occurred during these two years of study for my masters degree. I shall restrict myself to the telling of one.

Tom Killduff's thesis project involved the inheritance of red kernel colour in wheat. As it turned out, the expressions of the character were controlled by three pairs of duplicate genes which acting quantitatively, <sup>gave</sup> theoretically, six gradations of red colour. It further turned out that a big Swede, Fred Almskoug, was assigned to help with the assessing the colour classes for some thousands of segregating plants. Tom worked manfully on Fred's data trying to fit them, in succession, to every conceivable genetic ratio. No fit. Mendelian laws did not apply. Tom wondered if he might not be on to something new, something that transcended all known laws of inheritance.

At this point I entered this disturbed but hopeful scene. I had just found a colored chart (with green and red spots predominating in a design making up several numbers) that would diagnose red-green color blindness. To me the numbers were clearly discernable, so I was normal. Then I began to test my friends. All normal — except Fred Almskoug. Tom came into the Lab.

"Fred is color blind," I said

"Eh?" from Tom.

"Red-green color blindness."

"You mean he can't distinguish red from other colors!"

"That's right."

Tom smote his forehead.

He went over to where Fred was sorting wheat seeds into six piles, a blind man's gradations of red. With both hands he swept the piles all together.

"Well, I'll be . . . etc. etc."

\* \* \*

I completed two pieces of research in the period May 1931 to September 1933. One, my masters thesis, "Studies on the inheritance of covered smut reaction, lemma color, awn development and rachilla pubescence in oats;" the other, "Natural and artificial hybridization of Avena sativa with A. fatua and its relation to the origin of fatuoids." Both were published in Canadian Journal of Research (1933 and 1934, respectively).

When I graduated in May 1933, I already held a fellowship tenable at the State College of Washington (W.S.C.), Pullman, under an eminent geneticist and plant breeder, Dr. E. F. Gaines.

As at my previous graduation two years earlier, I couldn't get a job; but I could win a fellowship that would support studies for a higher degree. For these were years sunk into the very depths of the great depression.

My final job at U. of A. was in June 1933 with the Department of Extension, acting as a sort of "dean of men in residence" to the Farm Young Peoples Week. I had the privilege of working with A.E. Corbett, H. P. Brown and Eric Cormack.

Before leaving the Edmonton scene I want to acknowledge a great indebtedness to several families that opened their homes to me in friendship and understanding: the McDougalls (daughters Peggy, Myrtle and Marion), the Bakers (daughters Norma and Doris), the Bells (daughter Amo and niece Mary), the Leonards (daughter Irene and son Ray), the Porter's (daughter Helen). Remembering now, after forty years, I say God bless them!

\* \* \*

At the end of August, 1933, I went down to Stavelly to help with the harvest. Two weeks later I was off to Pullman: by C.P.R. to Yahk, B.C., then by the Spokane International to Spokane, with the final leg by bus.

En route, I again counted my money. Nearly a hundred dollars saved from my bursary (by tenting!), \$240 as a cash loan from my Imperial Life policy. My fellowship would take care of all fees. At the border I was handed a U.S. Department of Labor leaflet warning me, as an alien, that I would not be permitted to engage in remunerative employment during my sojourn.

In Pullman I was met at the Washington Hotel by Orval Vogel (who was to become a life-long friend). He piled me and baggage in his tan-gray U.S.D.A. Ford pickup and drove up the hill to Wilson Hall. There I met Dr. Gaines, Prof. E. G. Schafer and Dean E. C. Johnson. After being installed in Room 210, Orval drove me to my place of room and board, at Mrs. Carlson's 1105 F. Street, near the Bohler Gym.

At Mrs. Carlson's the emphasis was on board, not room. The meals were above any criticism either as to quality or quantity; but the rooms, especially the bathroom, were drastically over-populated. I shared a small room with A.M. (Dick) Schlehuber and the bathroom with nine other students. So a long boarding-house reach was not the criterion of survival on F Street; it was early to bed, early to rise — and first to the bathroom.

The Department of Labor ruling denying aliens gainful employment seriously reduced my fellowship support and, as Carlson's was expensive, I joined Mrs. Hazen's "starvation squad" at 510 Morton Street after Christmas (I was home at Stavelly for Christmas).

Mrs. Hazen's boys (five) each paid \$5.00 per month for a shared room and bought one-fifth of the required groceries, from which the old lady

prepared the meals, including her own. Our difficulties arose from improvidence on the part of some of the boys (especially "Lefty" Irving, holder of a baseball scholarship, and my room-mate). I was always one of the first to buy groceries (or to pay for what Mrs. H. bought); but when the total reached about \$7.00, my normal share, I would withhold further outlay, hoping another would take over. And in the final five or six days of almost every month there would be no groceries.

With the onset of this foodless period, my fellow "boarders" would frequent their fraternity houses at meal times, and Mrs. H. moved in with her daughter, Mrs. Thompson. I was all alone, certainly in the dining room, at Morton Street.

Now it happened that I, the provident one, put in vegetable gardens, both at Mrs. Hazen's and in spare rows in my experimental plots. So, in lean periods, I might be seen at the dining-room table with the dishpan full of lettuce and spinach, taking my fill like a cow at her manger. Or, I might not come home at noon; I would lunch at my plots. There I would look down a row of immature carrots and, with concern for the morrow, decide on a menu of say, six linear feet, and make a mark accordingly. With a nice clean wooden pot label in hand, I would pull, scrape and eat the reddish-yellow roots till I came to my mark.

I have a record of one of these grocery-deficient months. It reads: "Total paid in, \$8.40; refund, \$3.35; actual outlay \$5.13".

But I have been talking about lunches (there were no breakfasts). Dinners were diets of a different color. As a Canadian, a guest, I enjoyed the generous American hospitality more than my fellows in the starvation squad. Several of my professors had given me indefinite invitations to dinner in their homes. And when this carrotty, spinachy period was upon me

I would drop into the office of one, or more, of these prospects early in the day, and usually the dinner matter would come up — which I would adroitly suggest might be that very evening. Thus, I seldom missed having a good dinner (which did for breakfast, too) even in the leanest periods.

While on this theme of eating by my wits, I should mention two other instances of exercising<sup>S</sup> my instincts for survival. (And then I must desist, for the great depression is the subject of the next chapter).

Dr. and Mrs. Gaines were anxious that I should experience some of the <sup>better</sup> aspects of American culture, and to them this meant, above all, the Grange (Patrons of Husbandry). So I was admitted into this great rural organization and, in due course, stood in resplendent Steward's sash at the doorway of the meeting place, brandishing a fine shepherd's crook. The meeting reminded me of the United Farmers back home but with much greater ritual, sociability, religious fervor — and inclinations toward food. I liked ~~ever~~thing about the Grange but, in those hungry thirties, especially the latter. I was very popular with the ladies, helping to wash the dishes — and going home with packets of delectable left overs! They were a fine group. I wonder if the American new way of life has eliminated it. And always, when I hear the word "fidelity", I think of the Grange.

During the summer of 1934 I left Mrs. Hazen's and took an 18-day hitchhike tour of Washington. I ~~saw~~ the very beginning of the Grand Coulee Dam, then Seattle, and Mount Rainier — where I stayed with my cousin Mildred (Hap) and her husband Natt Dodge (who was the Ranger) and children Nattalie and Griff. The total cost of the whole trip was \$11.00, including several films.

Back in Pullman, I went batching with Bob Jeffery and Tex Aubrey.



First we had a basement room, doing janitor work for Pacific Fruit Co. and being paid in kind — usually over-ripe bananas. Indeed, one of us was known affectionately as Banana Bob! Then we expanded by doing similar services also for the Cold Storage Co-op, being paid by free occupancy of a room on the premises. We now had a sort of South Seas island security: shelter and bananas. In November my share of supplementary groceries was only three dollars.

At this time the Graduate Club (I was President) planned a steak fry at the picnic grounds on the Colfax road. Bob and Tex were my guests, and they helped me pack-up at the end. There were 17 steaks left over! We had a couple of ice cream containers (tall tapering tubs holding an ice pack around a larger metal cylinder) from the Milk House. We put the steaks in one of these, and marked it. Later, in town, we went to the Milk House yard and, when the patrolman has passed on his round, we retrieved the steaks. These we hid in the cold storage plant. And twice a week for the next month we ended our janitorial labors by taking home two steaks. Even with two-thirds of a steak each, it was high living at our place.

\* \* \*

In June of that year (1934) I was awarded the R.C. McCroskey Research Fellowship. This was a major honor; but, being dependent on proceeds from a trust fund, financial support was at its low ebb in my year — \$320.00.

After a trip home for Christmas, I left Bob and Tex to set-up housekeeping in a shack just above Oak Street with a Chinese student, Mr. Pin Ling Hsu. Small and lithe, he was <sup>the</sup> <sub>1</sub>tidiest and most considerate room-mate I ever had. Our room with its 2-tier bunk bed, new linoleum on the floor and

Mr. Hsu's oriental decorations (including a 2-string fiddle that he played beautifully, especially Annie Laurie) was very attractive. Except for breakfast, we ate out a good deal and I often joined Bob and Tex — bringing some groceries to add variety to their diet.

In the summer of 1935 Mr. Hsu and I moved to 904 Colorado Street, the main improvement being a private bath. This location was on a hill just above F Street — so I arranged for my evening meals at Mrs. Carlson's.

That spring Dr. Gaines gave me a 15-foot strip of land on the acreage which he rented out to some of his colleagues in measured garden plots. This strip, a quarter-mile long, was supposed to be inferior because of competition from a row of apple trees across the fence on the adjoining farm. Well, I had a bumper crop of everything: sweet corn, potatoes, tomatoes, melons, carrots, beets, etc.— and, legally, all of the apples that hung over on my side of the fence. I gave produce to the starvation squad at Mrs. Hazen<sup>2</sup>~~s~~, to Mrs. Carlson, to Bob and Tex and to all needy students that I knew. There were still many things to dig or pick when I left in August, and Banana Bob took over.

\* \* \*

I received my doctorate degree in June, 1935. There were only four of us so honored. Mother and Dad and the Staveland baseball pitcher, Lester "Slim" Haynes, drove down to see me, and one of the Haynes children, graduate.

As Dr. Johnson, my first job was in tinsmithing, helping Orval Vogel build the first of his famous<sup>S</sup> portable nursery threshers — at 25 cents per hour! My second was in nearby Moscow, Idaho, where I helped

excavate a church basement — with a big shovel at 50 cents per hour. My third was on a farm where I filled a wheelbarrow at a cement mixer, ran it up a plank and dumped it into a basement wall form. This also paid 50 cents an hour; but the fringe benefits, in the form of meals provided by that farmer's wife, were what I appreciated most.

My being paid these wages, as an alien, was probably contrary to law. But nobody, including myself, felt that I was any longer of that status.

I left Pullman in mid-August. My thesis, jointly supervised by Dr. Gaines and Dr. H.F. Clements (plant physiologist) was promptly published in the Canadian Journal of Research in two parts: "General preliminary studies on the physiology of delayed germination in Avena fatua", and "The inheritance of delayed germination in hybrids of Avena fatua and A. sativa". I also published another paper on the origin of fatuoids.

## CHAPTER 11. LOWER, LOWER, INTO THE DEPTHS OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION

Back on the farm, 1929 was not the best of years, a dryish summer and too much snow in the fall; but wheat was selling at \$1.24 a bushel. The historic day, October 25, Black Friday, when the New York stock market crashed, hardly reverberated on the farm — nor even at the University. But the crash made a shambles of economic structures round the world, and the shock waves hit us in due course — hit us hard.

Stringent restriction of financial credit to business and industry brought stagnation to trade and investment, and short shrift to factories and primary producers. It was a time of unemployment and bankruptcy, soup kitchens and relief, of human misery and shame and hopelessness. And it lasted in its slow process of recovery into the onset of the Second World War.

It was a time of desperate expedients, of Gessell's free-money script, of Townsend's buying power for senior citizen — and of Roosevelt's Blue Eagle.

The Blue Eagle symbolized the N.R.A. (National Recovery Act), a corner stone in President Roosevelt's New Deal — introduced in June 1933. The N.R.A. drew billions from the Federal Reserve, at only the cost of book-keeping, and put the nation on the payroll.

(Incidentally, the prohibition act was repealed, as part of the New Deal, but not before I sampled some of Dick Schlehuber's purchase of bathtub gin — atrocious! The first legal booze available in Pullman was Old Crow Apricot Brandy).

By this time, back on the farm, Dad was selling wheat at 20 cents a bushel, pigs at two cents a pound, and beef at a price that didn't pay

freight charges.

But I was at the State College of Washington (W.S.C.), and there I pick up my story, already introduced in the previous chapter.

\* \* \*

The effects of economic depression were much more noticeable at W.S.C. than they had been at U.A. There are some obvious reasons for this. First, a higher proportion of the student population came from hard hit rural areas; second, the higher proportion of high school graduates entering college brought more students, working their way through; and, of course, I was at W.S.C. in the more advanced stages of depression.

There were no tuition fees at W.S.C., except for out-of-state students. I saw students hitch-hiking into Pullman carrying all their luggage. One chap, a veterinarian student who I got to know quite well, arrived in a threshing-outfit bunk car, pulled by a team of light horses with a milk cow tied behind. He parked on grassy waste ground at the edge of town. The bunk car was fixed-up with a kitchenette and there was sleeping space for four. This chap rented three bunks at \$5.00 a month each, sold some extra milk and had two riding horses to let. Ideas make plutocrats!

At U.A. we all were middle class; at W.S.C. we had the very poor and the very rich. Students picking coal, (for batching stoves) along the railway tracks were unnoticed by the scion of wealth, whizzing by in a red coupe on his way to a luxurious fraternity house.

Indeed, I think the fraternity-sorority system accentuated more than anything else the social strata on campus. In my first year I went

to the sororities open-house (perhaps the biggest event of all) with the agricultural fraternity, AGR (Alpha Gamma Rho). We went as a group spending about 15 minutes in orderly succession at some ten or a dozen sorority houses. I would find myself greeted, sometimes enthusiastically, by a young co-ed in her best dress. Her first question brought out the identity of my frat. AGR was hardly top-rung but gained my acceptance — especially when she found that I could dance. The next year I went, with Bob and Tex, as a non-fraternal, houseless Independent. Again the gracious greeting and the stock question. But now my status brought a coolness, even a dragging of dancing feet, certainly no overtures toward a closer acquaintanceship.

The poor students, in their hundreds, could not afford such dances as were held over town, nor pay fraternity initiation fees. They were social outcasts.

On many an evening there was a certain lonely alien, far from home, who walked dark campus streets with music of dancing in his ears. He would see dancing silhouettes in large, lighted windows — and wish fervently for the Saturday night dances at U.A.

I hasten to add that, only in this, did I ever feel left out. American hospitality was of the highest order and often went out of its way to make the alien feel very much at home.

The firm of J.C. Penny, Pullman, was my shopping headquarters. There I bought my corduroy trousers (which with my imported gray flannels lasted<sup>d</sup><sub>me</sub> through the two years), my maroon sweater and my coffee-brown socks. The latter, almost all-cotton at 19¢ a pair, I made my standard in the interests of interchangeability. I ended up with three such socks, wearing two and carrying one as a spare.

In 1933-34, Christmas holidays were especially interesting on the campus. Many students withdrew from College to gain eligibility for N.R.A. employment. They were paid 90¢ an hour to perform assigned tasks, some real, some bordering on the imaginary. They re-registered for their courses early in January. My assistant, Lewis Weiner, was such a one. I gave him some real work to do and went, sans New Deal, to holiday in my native land.

I have left to the last an experience that is certainly unique, and probably a good "low" story even in the mid-thirties depths. Dr. Gaines farmed some land about a mile east of the campus. In 1934 he planted corn by the check-row method, and hired me (at 25¢ an hour) to thin the hills to three plants each. We surveyed the field the afternoon before from the golf course hill. There stretched the corn-field a pattern of green dots, and on a hillside to the left a sunlit field of solid pea-green. Next morning I made my way, breakfastless, to the corn field, carrying only a water bag, for I was to lunch on luscious peas. Noon finally arrived and I crossed the fence, hungrily, to the pea field. Any other pea field in the country would have had peas, but this was a late crop. So I sat myself down with the friendly water bag and ate pea vines like a cow. Actually pea vines are quite tasty and undoubtedly nutritious; but in chewing you develop a cud, which must be disgorged. I advise that you eat alone in the open, and have a water bag handy.

One might suppose that the depression was hard on morale. This was certainly not true of a single young man successfully advancing through university. My spirit was never stronger. I never lost my sense of humor nor my optimism. There have been times in my later life, of soft affluence,

when I let situations get me down that would have never fazed me in my strength of morale during the hard days of the thirties.

I have searched my mind for a hint of bitterness. There is none! I give the following for psychologists to ponder. One Wednesday evening I took Mrs. Hazen to prayer meeting at the Baptist church (I often did this because she walked with difficulty and needed a strong arm). I had just 15 cents and no immediate prospects of ~~more~~. It gave me a great lift, I am not sure whether good or bad, to contribute my all to the collection. I was penniless for a week.

Such, not to dwell overlong upon them, were my hungry days at W.S.C. I left in August 1935, and I left triumphant.

\* \* \*

My baggage when leaving Pullman was very much the same as at my arrival — except for books. The campus Bookstore had been a bit irresistible, and I came away with some books, still cherished — Shakespearean, Dickensian, and historical.

After buying my ticket home I still had nearly a hundred dollars. So, during the stopover in Spokane, I bought a charcoal-gray suit — to enhance my Ph.D.

Arriving back on the farm, I immediately took control of our Oliver combine. It was a great thrill to harvest again over familiar contours; to see Dad up to his knees in a truck box, levelling a filling load of wheat; to do some little chores for Mother and to savor her cooking — some special dishes for me!

Of course, I was looking for a job. On Sunday, August 25, Richard drove me up to Calgary where we attended William Aberhart's



afternoon lecture at the Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute. Just three days before, Aberhart's Social Credit party had won a landslide victory in the Provincial elections.

After the lecture Richard, a prominent Social Crediter, introduced me to Aberhart† and made known to him my qualifications and availability. Aberhart was jolly, optimistic <sup>and</sup> — non-committal. I had no idea, then, that I would one day write a biography of William Aberhart.

My next step in job-seeking was obviously Edmonton and the University. It was for me a happy reunion with old friends, but a blank draw employmentwise. I now fell back on an offer from Dr. C.L. Huskins, McGill University, Montreal, which I had received just before leaving Pullman. This, my only prospect, was a post-doctorate fellowship carrying a stipend of \$60 a month.

So before leaving Edmonton I went to see one of my favorite professors, Robert D. Sinclair, Animal Husbandry. After the preliminaries, we got down to business, which had to do with cattle trains to the East. The law provided for a man, designated as responsible for the welfare of the animals in a specified car, to travel on the pertinent train -- free. Obviously, my best means of getting to Montreal. Prof. Sinclair gave me the names and a general letter of introduction to some Calgary shippers -- and wished me well.

\* \* \*

In late September I took leave of my family and friends and boarded the train (passenger) from Staveland to Calgary. Registering at the Palace Hotel on 9th Avenue W. (50¢ a day), I made my way to the Calgary Stock Yards, a maze of whitewashed pens covering several acres. The

headquarters building was crowded with buyers and sellers and shippers.

I was, of course, vitally interested in the latter — but they were emphatically not interested in me.

With time on my hands, I made several beautifully executed hand bills, making a point of my desperate need of transportation as I was overdue at McGill. These I posted or handed round. I was a familiar figure at the yards for several days before a Mr. Williams, from Didsbury, showed up — he was on Prof. Sinclair's list. I was immediately signed-on to accompany his car of young breeding stock, consigned to Temiskaming, Ontario.

That evening I found myself in a C.P.R. caboose and was shortly joined by another McGill student, Mort Freeman. We had a fine time napping and observing the prairie countryside from the cupola of the caboose. Conductors and trainmen were changed at each divisional point. Our first stop was at Portage-la-Prairie, Manitoba. There I saw my car and cattle charges for the first time — car no. 274109.

We were now joined by two more cattle custodians and, by regulation, were transferred to an old colonist car (no more than two in a caboose). Here began my most enjoyable train journey. We bought bacon and eggs, bread and beans, etc. There was a flat-topped heating stove with wood and coal provided, also a coffee pot and skillet. The black leather seats would slide together to make good beds. And we were four good companions.

There was a full-day stop in Winnipeg, and we added to our groceries. Then eastward again.

Sitting in our private car watching Mort (a theological student — Presbyterian) puff contentedly at his pipe, I thought of Dad and Frank and Pete in the solid comfort of their box car back in 1904. And of Mother and Richard and Howard — and Cecilia — possibly in this very same colonist

car!

We skirted the rugged, red-rock, north shore of Lake Superior and, two days out of Winnipeg, came to White River, Ontario. There all the stock were off-loaded for feed and water and exercise. I tried to help get the stock out of 274109 but found the local staff fully competent and, indeed, not desirous of my assistance. But I did pat the rumps of a few of my heifers.

After a week on the freight we arrived in North Bay. There my car was dropped, to take the branch line north to Temiskaming. And I was also dropped, for my journey led to the east.

\* \* \*

I went out on Highway 17, with suitcase and bulging briefcase, and tried to thumb a ride. Unsuccessful, I went back to North Bay and inquired about fares and times of trains to Montreal. Then back to my thumbing. Again unsuccessful, I rushed back to town just in time to catch the train — with passage paid-for.

There were glimpses of the beautiful Ottawa Valley country, and *of* Ottawa itself. Then Windsor Station, Montreal. On the streets I soon found a pawnshop. There I sold outright the old tweed suit that I stood in — for 50 cents! After a backroom change of clothers, I emerged a gentleman and proffered my gold coin for evaluation. This \$5.00 piece had been given to me by Mrs. Leonard in 1933 before I left Edmonton, to be spent when my state of affairs so required. I got \$5.50.

I presented myself briefly to Dr. Huskins, Biological Building, McGill, and then went room hunting. My plan was to lodge with a French-

speaking family, with a view to the attainment of bilingualism.

A house on the corner of Shuter and Milton Streets bore the sign "Chambre à Louer". The maid (Rosie) who answered my knock spoke no English. The landlord spoke badly broken English. The rate was \$22.00 per month for a shared room and board, exclusive of lunch. I paid for a month in advance, and found my balance was eight dollars and change.

\* \* \*

#### THE SONGS WE SANG

Recalling the songs of Thirties brings back visions of smiling faces, of happy events, each having an association with a particular tune. The music of this period had melody, harmony and rhythm; many of the lyrics were pure poetry.

At the very beginning we had "Tiptoe through the Tulips" (without the talent of Tiny Tim). And "I'm Just a Vagabond Lover" (with Rudy Vallee).

Then came "If I Had a Talking Picture of You", "Painting the Clouds With Sunshine" and "On the Sunny Side of the Street".

A little later, in the thickening gloom, we were "Whistling in the Dark". And then, in the hope of prosperity just around the corner, came "Dream a Little Dream of Me", "How Deep is the Ocean" and "I Found a Million Dollar Baby in a Five and Ten Cent Store".

By the middle thirties we were singing "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime", "Stormy Weather", "Try a Little Tenderness", "Lazy Bones", and "Just an Echo in the Valley". They were period pieces, and they sustained us in their time — the low time. So did "A Shanty in an Old Shanty Town", "Did You Ever See a Dream Walking", "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes", "Night and Day," the beautiful "Love Letters in the Sand", "Sleepy Head", and Jack Benny's

famous "Love in Bloom".

Passing into the last half of the decade we had the depression bridegroom pledging "Everything I Have is Yours", and the bride declaring "Love is the Sweetest Thing".\* At the reception, depression style, the wedding guests sang "I Was Lucky", "Hands Across the Table", "Coffee in the Morning, Kisses in the Night", and hopefully, "Stay as Sweet as You Are".

Other favorites of the time were, "Rain", "In My Solitude", "The Isle of Capri", "I Believe in Miracles", "Be Still, My Heart" and the novelty "The Music Goes Round and Round".

And later, "Red Sails in the Sunset", "Moon Over Miami", "You Are My Lucky Star", "Harbor Lights", "Pennies from Heaven", "Did an Angel Kiss You?", "A Chapel in the Moonlight" and the tender western, "Empty Saddles."

As the thirties drew to a close we went "South of the Border", and a teenaged Judy Garland sang "Over the Rainbow" with the voice of an angel. The pace changed for the lively "Beer Barrel Polka", but the tempo was restored with "Three Little Fishes".

And at the very end I say, with Bob Hope, "Thanks for the Memory."

Most readers of my generation will say thanks, I know, for the memories that my titles recall; and some, I think, may shed a tear for the sober quiet time of the thirties, for the incidents, places and loved ones in an era long since past.

## CHAPTER 12. THE NEAREST EAST

As it turned out I was to be frustrated in my aspirations to proficiency in spoken French. All of the other roomers (about ten) were English-speaking, and the landlord and his wife were unsympathetic with my feeling for biculturism. Rosie, the maid, beyond "Bon jour", confined herself to shouting up the staircase with such expressions as "Le petite déjeuner il est prêt". And at that level my French conversation remains to the present day.

It was my good fortune to have as my room-mate a very fine chap, Edward (Boots) Boothroyd, a law student from Lennoxville, Quebec, where his father was Professor of History at Bishop's College University. He had been to school in England and had a very strong feeling for its history and traditions. (Four years later he joined the Royal Montreal Regiment, and he died at Caen in June, 1944. I gave his name to one of my sons, but that little soul lived only a few hours).

At the University I met many well-known professors such as F.E. Lloyd and others in science. But I did not meet Stephen Leacock. Indeed, in spite of my bookishness, I knew only vaguely that he was a Canadian humorist. In later years I was to place in my library, and to read with great pleasure, over 20 of his books. This is an indictment of the neglect of Canadian authors in our school curricula.

Dr. Huskin's department was housed in one big corner room the outer walls of which were lined with seven or eight metal cubicles, each with a young geneticist occupying its 64 square feet of floor space. There were Alma Howard, A. W. S. Hunter, R. Merton Love, Gerard Sander and S. G. Smith — later to be names of note in the field of cytogenetics. I am

proud to have occupied one of the cubicles, to have shared in the stimulation of their tea-times, and to have spent a winter in relating fatuoid phenotypes to micronuclei in pollen-mother-cellttetrads.

Montreal was, even then, a great cosmopolitan city and I enjoyed it to the full, even to the point where I could say "money have I none". There were hockey games, and six-day bicycle races at The Forum, wrestling and boxing at the Mount Royal Arena, night clubs and Sunday morning movies (with vaudeville). I skied at Strathmore and Dorval (before the airport), climbed Mount Royal and felt the fascination of the harbor.

After Boots, my main friends were Marge and Blanche Borgen (from Saskatchewan) and Molly Wootton.

Merton Love got a job at the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, and informed me of a prospective opening for myself in that institution. In November I went to Ottawa in this connection. I was interviewed by Dr. E.S. Archibald, Director, and Dr. L.H. Newman, Dominion Cerealist, and offered a choice of positions. First, to go to Brandon, as Assistant Superintendent at the Experimental Farm; second, to do research work on intergeneric hybrids at the Forage Division, Central Experimental Farm. I chose the latter.

\* \* \*

I moved to Ottawa in February, 1936, staying temporarily in a room at The Orange Lantern, 1087 Carling Avenue (just beyond the Civic Hospital). A few days later I became "one of the family" at Mrs. Cardiff's, 133 Spadina Avenue.

My work at the Central Experimental Farm (C.E.F.) was under the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act (P.F.R.A.) and had to do with the development of a large-seeded, perennial wheat from hybrids between Triticum (common

wheat) and Agropyron (wheat grass). This new large-seeded crop was to be sown, with a standard grain drill, to establish large community pastures on submarginal farm land, mainly in Saskatchewan. This was part of a general policy of better land use, in which farmers would be removed from sub-marginal areas and resettled on good agricultural land.

In reminiscing about my two years at C.E.F., I must start, as a background, with the preposterous working hours practised at that institution. At its inception in 1886, Dr. Wm. Saunders, the first Director, decided that laborers and technical workers at C.E.F. should be practical agriculturists, even to the point of keeping farmer's hours. In 1936, I worked a 58-hour week along with hundreds of other "unclassified" employees of the Farm, including most of the scientific staff such as Dr. John Armstrong (Cytogeneticist), Frank Nowasad (Pasture research), etc. The hours were 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Mondays to Fridays and 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday. There was an hour off for lunch. But no sick leave and no vacation.

The "classified" civil servants (administrators, stenographers, etd.) came to work at 9:00 and left at 4:30 or, in hot weather, at 4:00.

Before the end of my first week I was reprimanded by Mr. Gray, who carried out his duties in telling me that I had once left the premises at 11:55 a.m. instead of 12:00 noon.

"Your individual action", he said as though reading a prepared statement, "was in itself unimportant; but it was taken as a signal — you were followed by about a hundred others!"

Several months later a new era for non-senior scientists was introduced at C.E.F. We were to go to work at nine — we were classified. Mrs. Cardiff and I danced around the dining room. I would have breakfast at 7:30 with son Kenneth (who worked in a butcher shop). For a week I



went to the Bee Division and signed my name well above the red line, that would be ruled across the time-in page sharp at nine. I arrived at work with stenographers. I visualized freedom on Saturday afternoon, tennis at the Edinburgh Club. For a week. Then, on the basis of my P.F.R.A. connections, I was unclassified. And, again, Kenneth breakfasted alone.

The Triticum-Agropyron hybridisation program at C.E.F. required hundred of crosses. The National Research Council was also involved. Dr. Frank Peto was to undertake cytological studies on the F<sub>1</sub> Hybrids, and Mr. Grier Young was to help me make them. Greer was an excellent and most congenial helper; but it was a little absurd for him to arrive two hours after my field labors started, and to leave me an hour and a half before they ended.

In January 1938, I made a memorable western trip, visiting Dominion experimental stations at Indian Head, Scott, Lacombe, Lethbridge and Swift Current. And, incidentally dropping in on old friends at Saskatoon, Edmonton, Stavely and Pullman. My official job was to arrange for a proper testing of my perennial wheats, as forage plants, at the various stations. In Saskatchewan the 1937 crops had failed, and agriculturists were happy to test my radically-different product.

I recall my visit to Scott as though it happened only last winter. I was travelling by C.P.R. and, Scott being on the C.N.R., I stopped at Wilkie, where I arrived in the evening. From my hotel I telephoned Mr. G. D. Matthews, the Superintendent at Scott. He told me that MacIsaac would pick me up at eight next morning. At that hour the late F.M. MacIsaac found me ready to go and turning down a cup of coffee, escorted me to his "sedan". This was a small, well-glazed house on sled runners, equipt with padded seat, heater and smoke stack. The lines controlling the pair of

lively horses ran through a slot under the front window. We didn't go by road; we went diagonally south-west across weighted-down fences : straight for Scott. Cosy by the fire, sleigh bells jingling, dawn giving bright touches to the snowy fields, we slid our eight-mile journey in utter comfort.

In the early evening of a successful day, MacIsaac took me, by "sedan", back to Wilkie in time for the Edmonton train which seemed rough going by comparison.

\* \* \*

Socially, I tended to shun the city and take to the country, perhaps because I kept farmer hours. This was expedited in May, 1936, by the purchase (for \$275) of a 1931 Chevrolet sedan in exceptionally fine condition. One of my assistants, Denzil Graham, was from Stittsville, some twenty miles south-west of Ottawa, and when fall brought a returning social season I was introduced to activities in the Orange Hall of that town. And there, at a dance I met Delta Hewitt, a very pretty school teacher.

I came to feel right at home in this farming community — and at the Hewitt's. Delta's (Del's) widowed mother had a small farm with two sets of buildings. She and family were "in residence" at the Upper Place, leaving the Lower Place vacant. It happened that the latter had a large concrete basement, and the former a large pile of well-rotted horse manure. The result: Johnson & Hewitt Mushrooms. It was a successful venture, especially in the quality of the product. Our only competitor was a very large firm, Slack Bros. of Waterloo, Quebec. Their mushrooms reached the

Ottawa stores a day or more old, and brownish; ours were freshly picked, and glistening dewy white. Demand, at a premium price, was constantly greater than supply.

Del and I also went into broiler chicken production, utilizing unused building space. We only broke-even on this due to skunks, the regular kind and the two-legged, thieving kind.

The Ottawa country is beautiful in the summer and even more-so in the fall. I remember especially friends' cottages on White Lake and up the Gatineau River (especially Ardath, the cottage of Lilian McCormick's aunt at Tenaga, Quebec). Autumn colors were (and are) unsurpassed with the reds of the red maple and sumac and the bright yellow of the aspens. But I must not forget the beautiful elms of summer, nor the winter spruce.

At C.E.F. we had a five-pin bowling league (I have some silver spoons to show for it) and a winter broom-ball tournament (the bruises from which have long since disappeared).

This brings me to 1938 and my return from the west. The period that followed was full of changes, both professional and personal.

\* \* \*

There: then existed under the aegis of the National Research Council of Canada (N.R.C.) a body called the Associate Committee on Forestry-- existed, as to the biology of the forest tree, in name only. Some Canadian biologists were aware of some exploratory efforts being made in Europe and U.S.A. toward the improvement of forest trees by modern methods of plant breeding. And an active few decided that something should be done along these lines in Canada.

A Sub-Committee on Forest-Tree Breeding was formed under the parental Associate Committee, and in March, 1938, I was appointed by the N.R.C. as Canada's first Forest Geneticist. The Dominion Forest Service (D.F.S.) was cooperating with the N.R.C., particularly in providing facilities at their Petawawa Forest Experiment Station, Chalk River, Ontario. So I had two bases of operation: the N.R.C. Laboratories, Ottawa, where Dr. Frank Peto and Dr. Nat Grace were my nearest colleagues; and the Petawawa Station, where Dr. Carl Heimburger and Jack Farrar introduced me to forestry. Thus began nearly ten-years of the most interesting work of my career. I was a pioneer. Everything I did, or discovered, was new.

\* \* \*

My annual salary was a whopping \$2,100. So I got married (to Delta Hewitt, on March 5), moved into an apartment, bought a new (second-hand) car, and acquired a dog (Buster). I also took to the woods.

Most of that summer, and those to follow, was spent at Petawawa some 125 miles north west of Ottawa. Mainly I was climbing spruce and pine trees bagging female flowers (unfertilized "conel~~ets~~ts") and fighting mosquitos. It was desperate work, worthy of a pioneer. Girded with a linesman's safety belt and shouldered with a knapsack of tools and bags, I would ascend a select conifer. Near the top, about 50 feet above ground, I would attach myself loosely, so I could lean back to work. There ~~in~~ an aura of citronella-flavored mosquito dope, I would bag the female conel~~ets~~ts first with a pollen-tight glassine envelope (about 8 x 12), then with a protective kraft paper bag. This required holding the twig between the teeth so I could have both hands free for trimming and tying. The

mosquitos liked me more than they hated citronella, so I usually descended with a swollen countenance. A week or so later, I would be back with my converted bulb-atomizer pollen gun, acting as male spouse to my conelets. The hybrid seed would be collected the same fall for spruce, the next year for pine.

This was the stuff of the pioneer. It was science in the raw; but, emphatically, it was science.

A year of exciting research and great expectations ended in sadness. Our firstborn failed to live-out his first day and was buried in a Stittsville churchyard with his grandfather Hewitt.

Of course, there were several other species of trees to be crossed. The easiest were the poplars, in which a female tree of one species would be pollinated by a male tree of another, as detached branches, in the greenhouse. Then there was colchicine treatments to induce chromosome doubling, rooting experiments, studies of sap production by maples and birches, breeding for resistance to white pine blister rust, pulp and paper tests and pollen storage experiments. In all, and over several years, we worked on some thirty genera of forest trees, and most objectives were achieved.

In 1939, Carson Bradley, whom I knew at C.E.F., was added to my staff and Bill Holtz, N.R.C. greenhouseman, joined us for the summer months. Thus augmented, we developed a nursery at the new N.R.C. property on Montreal Road. A cottage was moved onto our site and a full basement built under it. I now had three levels of operation: laboratory, nursery and (at Petawawa) plantation.

I have very fond memories of those forestry years. There was good fellowship in the Staff House, good meals in the Cook House. I explored the most beautiful woods in the world, resting sometime by wilderness paths to watch browsing deer or a black bear and her cubs. I knew the lonely bush at dusk, and the call of the loon.

I recall with great pleasure my close association with Dr. Robert Newton, my "boss". And a long walk in the woods alone with N.R.C. President, General A.G.L. McNaughton.

Mother and Dad visited us twice. First, in December, 1941 and second, in the fall of '43. On the latter occasion we took them to New York, and that story is appended hereto.

My collection trips took me to the prairies, more particularly their montane or parkland verges. And I saw opportunities to start a project on shelterbelt improvement. In this I was ably assisted by John Walker, Indian Head, Sask., W.L. (Les) Kerr, Sutherland, Sask., and Dexter Champion, the Forest Ranger atop the Cypress Hills.

Some very interesting concepts of natural selection and of seed sources for shelterbelt nurseries came out of this work.

Incidental to this work in the west, there came opportunities to visit old scenes, the farm, the Porcupine Hills, the University and, above all — old friends.

The second appendix to this chapter is the record of my homecoming to the University as reported for the alumni magazine, The New Trail. It was written along the lines of Eleanor Roosevelt's, My Day, and somewhat in the style of Pepys' Diary.

I will end this chapter with a confession, a case of "now it can be told". It has to do with my dastardly, but successful, circumvention of

of that unconscionable evil of party politics — patronage.

Patronage had reared its ugly head while I was at C.E.F. We found useless jobs for people we didn't want — at the behest of the Party in Power. We retained on staff arrogant and heinous vandals — because we couldn't fire them. Patronage angered me.

The equipping, and later the day-to-day operation of our N.R.C. nursery on the Montreal Road, involved considerable local buying, especially in hardware. A patronage list was sent to me — some 70 stores from which I was to buy and whose printed name was to appear on the vouchers I submitted to recover my expense. I never bought a single item from any of these stores. The list was my guide of where not to go. If I needed a screwdriver I went to a non-patronage store. If it cost \$1.49, I performed the division  $149/7 = 21$  and 2 left over. Then I entered 21 miles (at 7 cents a mile) in my mileage account. In this matter of elementary justice and personal conscience, I was careful never to profit by a single cent. Sometimes I wondered if the administration might be puzzled by my buying so little — and travelling so much!!

\* \* \*

#### WITH MOTHER AND DAD IN NEW YORK

It was the fall of forty three. Dad and Mother were visiting us in Ottawa for the second time, and it occurred to us that they should see something of the surrounding country. We suggested New York — the City, that is.

Dad brightened up.

"Let's go!" he said; "none of us has ever been there!"

Mother looked at him steadily and, very slightly, sniffed.

"Is that so? I was there in ninety-three. Landed from the Teutonic and went into quarantine. Took us about a week. I imagine there's been some changes since then, so I don't mind seeing it ag'in".

We went off in the Pontiac Arrow Coupe, Del and I changing off in the matter of driving or "sitting", in the "opera" space behind the seat. The weather was beautiful. Gasoline being rationed, we left the Arrow in a parking garage in Albany and took the New York Central into town.

My cousin Vernice was working in New York at the time and had a studio apartment in Greenwich Village (W. 10th St.). She took us everywhere—from the Planetarium to Grant's Tomb. Mother wanted to shop. She was not impressed by Macy's nor by Gimbel's, and ended up making all her purchases at Cohen's Emporium (or some such place) on Union Square.

A high point (in both senses) was our visit to the Empire State Building. Mother and Dad looked down at the traffic a thousand feet below with perfect equanimity. Then they studied the dial of the wind guage. It was a squally day and the needle was swinging rather widely.

"What's that contraption?" Dad asked.

Before I could answer, an American sightseer volunteered the following:

"You see, this here building is the tallest in the world, and it sways a lot. 'Specially with them weak foundations. This is a sway guage. The needle tells how much the building swings back-and-forth".

Dad watched the needle. Suddenlly it swung through fifteen or twenty degrees.

"Judas Priest!" said Dad. "Let's get out of here!"



However, Mother had sufficient confidence in the Building to stop at a souvenir counter. She selected a metal ashtray mounting a miniature Empire State Building. The Building was a bit loose and the saleslady attempted to substitute a sound one.

"Thank you I'm sure, young lady," said Mother. "But I want this one". She wiggled the three-inch tower. "Because it's realistic!"

Later Dad was outlining his impressions to Cousin Vernice.

"Sure is a fine city. But it's built wrong. Too much up-and-down, not enough side-ways!"

\* \* \*

#### MY DAY -- AT THE UNIVERSITY

Monday, 28 August, 1944, was the day — the day upon which, after an absence of nine years, I visited the University. On the previous day I had broken my tour of the prairies (in the interests of tree breeding) by stopping off in Edmonton and had been comfortably installed in the home of Art ('39) and Beth Paul on 104th Ave.

After an early breakfast Art and I went by crowded bus and street-car to the Administration Building on 109th St. where Art is employed by the Department of Lands and Mines. After completing a small matter of official business, I visited Cyril Kenway '35 who is in charge of records and filing in the same department.

Then into a Whyte Ave. car and over the High Level Bridge to Steen's (don't mention Corner Drug to me). Then down 88th Ave. It might have been an Avenue of Sighs the way old memories slowed my steps and quickened my heart before this house and that — including the Algonquin.

And so on to 112th St. and the Tuck where, over a cup of coffee, I made the acquaintance of the new proprietor — Mr. McCoppen's successor twice or thrice removed — who broke all precedents by declaring my repast "on the house."

Then to North Lab. by way of the corridors of the Arts Building. On second floor, North Lab., I came upon the first of the succession of old friends I was to meet this day: Bob (sometimes called Dean) Sinclair '18 and Jack Bowstead. We were still exchanging personal data when McElroy '33, '34 came along followed closely by Prof. Macgregor Smith. Then through old, familiar classrooms and into Dr. Fryer's office. No change there, except that the man at the desk was greyer than in the old days. He was going over examination papers from his Summer School course in Genetics.

Finding that Professors Sackville and Art McCalla '29, '31 were absent and that lunch time was at hand, I left North Lab. and headed toward the new Cafeteria which occupies a site just west of South Lab. In the Cafeteria vestibule I met Prof. Shaw from whom I had taken Bact. 2 fifteen years before. He remembered my face but not my name. I entered — and there was Jessie Mitchell. After all those intervening years, after all those hundreds of students who had come and gone, she knew my name. She should be on the faculty! Having selected my food, I sought a table and noticing Doctors Wyatt and Alf Leahey '25, '27 joined them. Was pleased to see Dr. Wyatt looking so well after his long illness. We talked mainly of the north country, newly opened up by the Alaska highway, from which Alf had just returned.

From the Cafeteria I made my way toward Athabasca Hall. What

sacrilege is this! They (the military) have fenced off the residences. My way obstructed, I turned toward West Lab., and as I walked my eyes wandered from the Lab. building to the experimental field south of the road. I froze in my tracks. Another military building reared its ugly front up from that hallowed ground where in post-grad. days of '31 - '33 I had grown the oat hybrids for my thesis. Sacrilege upon sacrilege!

Into West Lab. and up the stairs to the old office which I shared with Walt Johnston '30, '31, '33, and which (now it can be told) Geoff Padwick, '31 '32 and I had used as sleeping quarters for two months during the depression summer of '33. Geoff and I were saving to go away for our doctorates — he to England, I to Washington — and we practised extremes in economy. Once, very early in the morning, we were caught by one of our professors — who gave us some very valuable advice on how better to avoid detection! Geoff, by the way, is now Imperial Mycologist for India, living in New Delhi.

But to get back to "My Day." I went down to the greenhouse and found Ernie Thompson. Same old Ernie. He will never forget when the Field Crops 50 class "tubbed" me in the big sink for talking out of turn. Well, we dug up many an old memory, and then I went to see Dr. Henry. As usual we talked about almost everything. His hair is white now, but with his young face it serves to make him look distinguished.

Going up to Dr. Sanford's Laboratory, I found Bill Broadfoot, Erin McAllister '31, '33, and Bill Cormack '31 all looking much the same. Erin has gone commercial — chemical fertilizers. Dr. Sanford and Larry Tyner '31, '33 were away.

Back to the Arts Building, I went to see the Dean Howes Memorial plaque and then up to Dr. Moss' office. Found he was out botanizing, but sent him a message through Mrs. Moss and will meet him in the foothills of S. Alberta.

Then to President Newton's office. Out, but would be in in about half an hour. So up to the museum where I met genial Dr. Allan. Still a few minutes to spare, so into the Registrar's office (meeting Dr. LaZerte on the way) to see Geoff Taylor. What an alumni association officer! He was getting my personal history up to date for alumni records when word came that Dr. Newton has returned.

I was pleased to find Dr. Newton still greatly interested in my forest tree breeding work, which was originally organized under him at the National Research Council. But I shall never forget the thrill I experienced when now, for the first time as President, he called me "Lee." I was unprepared for my reaction. My mind flashed back 17 years to the sunny September afternoon in Convocation Hall when, a half-scared country boy, I registered as a freshman at U. of A. Of all those registering that day none could have felt more insignificant than I. Now the President has called me "Lee." Truly, I have not lived in vain!

Dr. Newton wanted me to meet Professor Salter, editor of The New Trail. The matter arranged, I accompanied Prof. Salter to his office where he sat at Dr. Broadus' desk and we had a fine talk on tree breeding, concrete sidewalk construction, and those topics which lead naturally from the one to the other.

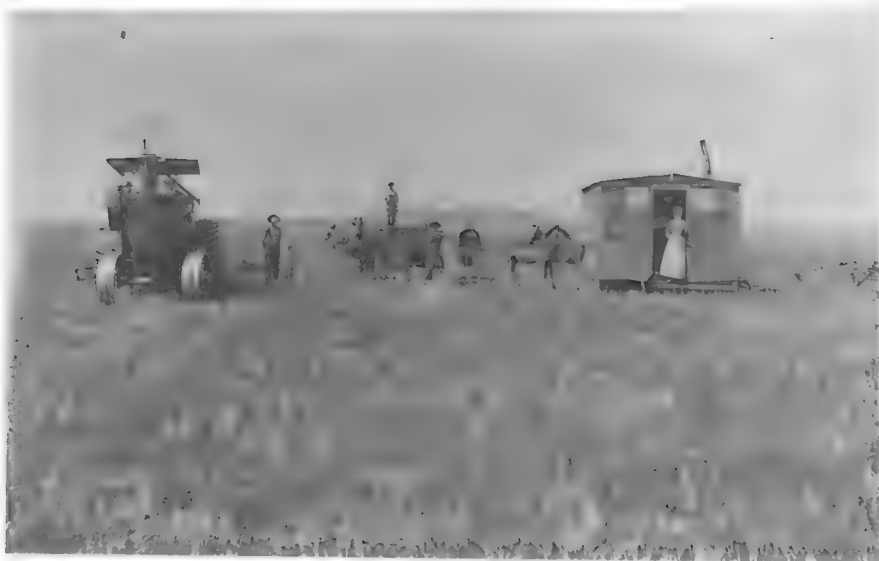
Leaving the Arts Building by the end door, we met President and Mrs. Newton, the latter looking tanned and fit after a holiday in Banff.

Taking leave of Prof. Salter, I went to the Cafeteria (it was now about 6:30) where, through a chance meeting, I dined with Dr. Sheldon. We talked mainly about Dr. Tory's new venture, Carleton College, which is such a conspicuous success in Ottawa.

Leaving Dr. Sheldon, I walked to 81st Ave. to visit Mrs. Norma (Baker) Eaglesham '32 and her three small daughters. Johnny '32 was on a field trip. Then to Dr. Porter's, 114th St.; but Helen '31 was away in New York. So out to the Highlands to stop with the Leonards an hour and then back to Art's and Beth's where I arrived at 10:30.

I close with a plea to those old friends who used to call me "Lilly Pansy Violet" (note my initials). I plead: please don't call me Eleanor! \*

\* Reference to Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt and her column, "My Day".



Plowing the prairies: Dad standing on his tank wagon, c. 1907

Mabel, May, Richard, LeRoy, Howard, c. 1915



Mountain Peak School: front row, Howard second, LeRoy fourth from left, c. 1912

Mountain Peak School: LeRoy far left, Mabel far right, c. 1914



Joe Beak and I, c. 1916

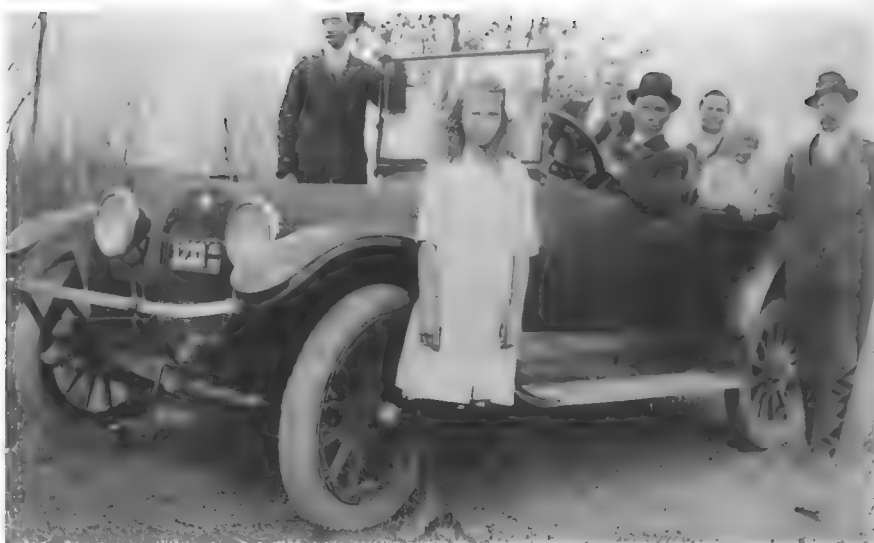
A threshing machine, home-made, c. 1916





Willow Creek in The Foothills, c. 1917

Threshing with steam power, c. 1917



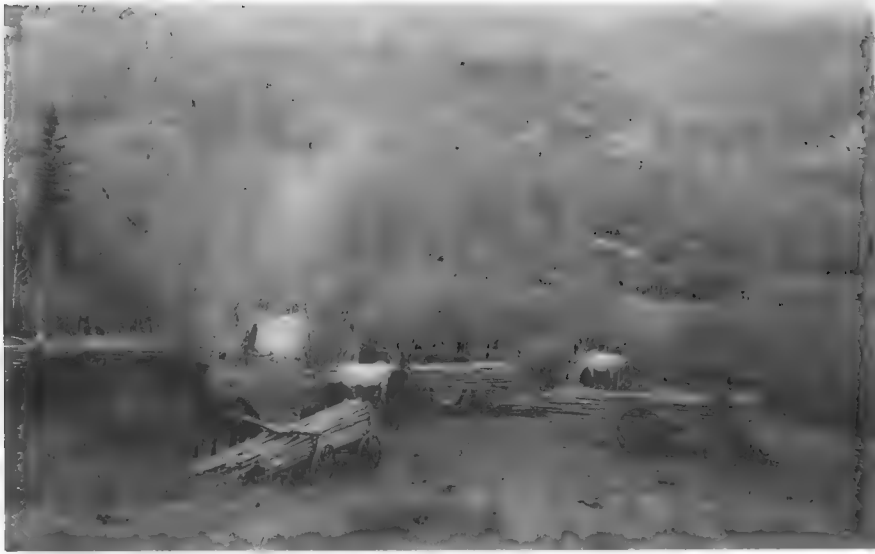
The McLaughlin-Buick D45 and proud owners, 1918

Bucking contest, Willow Creek picnic grounds, 1920



Four o'clock lunch (Mother and Dad), 1920

Threshing with gasolene power, 1921



Hauling wood, 1922

The Stavely fire, 1924



Indians, Fort McLeod, 1925

C.S.A. hockey team (LPV third from right), 1926



LPV age 30, 1935

My cattle car, 1935



Mother, Dad and I, Geneseo, Illinois, 1938

LPV in a spruce at Petawawa, 1939



Dad at 80, 1952

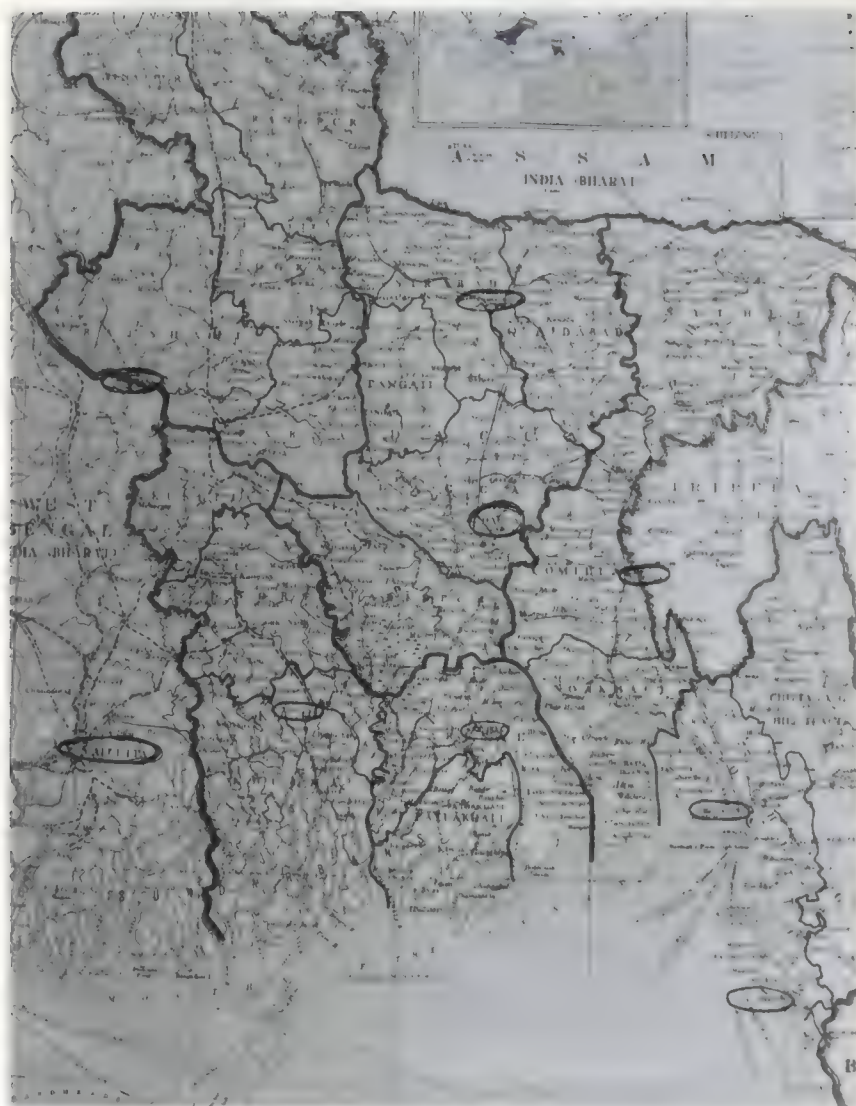
The Homestead at maturity (from the N.W.), 1948





LPV at 50, 1955

Map of Syria, Lebanon and Jordan



Map of East Pakistan



Buster, Bob, Elaine, Del, LPV (60th birthday), Elise, July 28, 1965

Elaine, Elise, Del, Bob, Shirley (at Driftwillow), 1965



LPV age 65, July 1970

## CHAPTER 13. WHAT DID YOU DO DURING THE WAR, DADDY?

The year 1939 would have been eventful, for us, even without the war. We built a new house, of our own design, on Sandy Hill (172 Marlborough Avenue) at a cost of \$4,960. The \$60 was the extra cost of a dormer that would permit my later construction of a proper stairs to the attic. Also, I bought a new car (right from the factory), a Pontiac Arrow coupe, for \$923 delivered in North Gower. Dad helped me with a loan of \$800. And when we moved into the new house, with its extra bedroom, we missed the little boy that we had lost.

I was at Petawawa and rose with the sun on Sunday, September 3, and turned on a radio full of war. Remembering the other war and its horrors, I spent the day alone in the peace and quiet of Loon Lake. When Canada declared war on the 5th I was back in Ottawa. There was a tenseness at N.R.C. General McNaughton was going to war, as chief of our army; but he hoped that his staff would stay in their laboratories, and work overtime for victory.

A succession of war projects came, with impressive secrecy, to me. The first, under Munitions and Supply, was to find at the earliest moment a large supply of the buckthorn Rhamnus frangula. British spies had found that the Germans were using charcoal of this hedge shrub to make slow-burning fuses in their highly-effective anti-aircraft shells. Well, I knew something of lover's lane in Tony's Pasture, about 30 acres of dense, shrubby wasteland near the Chaudiere Bridge. And being a botanist, I knew that the shrubs were R. frangula that had escaped cultivation. Before the day was out I had reported to Munitions and Supply, estimating the very substantial tonnage available and providing a sample for air shipment to

Woolwich Arsenal. I was now a cog in our war machine! And, eventually, I was commended for my promptitude.

Other assignments involved detective-work on the aircraft sabotage that took the life of the Hon. Norman Rodgers, Minister of Defence. I analysed the soil used to plug the motor intakes. This analysis, with the identification of the bits of grass I found, enabled the investigators to narrow down the act of sabotage to a single landing strip. Then I helped Dr. Frank Peto with the problem of sugarbeet seed supply (the Swedish source being cut off); and, also, Dr. Nat Grace in his search for natural rubber (milkweed, goat's beard and Russian dandelion). And the Royal Canadian Medical Corps assigned me the problem of providing vitamin C for far northern troops. I wonder if any sergeant cook ever used my seed-sprouting technique and if, in spite of vitamin adequacy, there were complaints on palatability grounds from mess tables? And so it went.

\* \* \*

Of course, with all those extra assignments, my forest-tree breeding was put on a maintenance basis.

And, of course, we did our bits for the war effort. Del joined the staff of the Ottawa-based British Inspection Board as a clerk in the comptometer section (payroll and technical purchases accounting) which she later headed. I fixed-up our attic and so helped to house the great influx of war workers. And, of course, I joined the Reserve Army (Royal Canadian Army Service Corps).

One of my activities that was completely halted by the war was the National Committee on Phenology, of which I was chairman. The 2630 amateur naturalists that had volunteered as observers (as of the burst of the first bud or the bite of the first mosquito) were freed for war work, together with our budget.

Bob was born on August 12, 1941, and Del's mother came as housekeeper and nurse.

It was a busy time. My research work and army work filled my days and most nights, with Sunday parades and maneuvers for good measure. My holidays were spent in the army camp at Connaught Ranges, South March. I started as a Private and ended as a Captain (Ammunition Officer). And, looking at my list of scientific publications, I see that I got out 15 papers between 1939 and 1945, inclusive.

As I have indicated, I belonged to the Amm. Coy., R.C.A.S.C.; but I also spent a good deal of time as an instructor in mass boxing and unarmed combat (commando stuff).

My progress upward in the army was very rapid (my C.S.M. found out that I had a Ph. D.). Especially, I enjoyed being a sergeant, although at a disadvantage in the mess. The "top" sergeant regularly drank eight big bottles of beer in the course of an evening, while I shared one bottle with Sergeant La Rogue. Otherwise, I enjoyed the respect and the best of relations with my comrades of the mess. Within a year I had a commission. The officers varied from top soldiers to stuffed shirts, and I was very very proud to have risen through the ranks.

I should mention one experience sustained as a private. We were being loaded into a troop transport (the tarp-covered rear of a 30 cwt. lorry). I was first in and, in being pressed back, I became frantic. I managed to

unbuckle the tarp and get my head out. And my claustrophobia subsided. This came from being trapped in the top of a granary as a small boy. I was shovelling wheat from the thresher spout and the grain gradually reduced the space. I cried out hopelessly into the noise of the machinery. Finally, I saved myself by letting the spout become plugged. Belts slipped, and I was extricated. Until the troop transport incident, I had no inkling of my phobia.

The army was for some four years my most immediate interest and I enjoyed it immensely, even the discipline. My main gripe was the waste, as of garbage drums full of half-eaten steaks, when civilians had to live with meat rationing.

My research colleagues in top-secret work, were absolutely impervious respecting information leaks (If I discount two of my friends who were later jailed for trying to help the Russian war effort by cutting a few corners around some bureaucratic obstacles). I am thinking particularly of the atomic energy research near Chalk River (now the site of Deep River). This work went on for several years on my very doorsteps, both at Petawawa in the N.R.C. itself. Several involved, such as Dr. Paul Gishler, were close personal friends. I had no knowledge whatsoever of this project — until Hiroshima.

\* \* \*

There are some personal, and unwarlike, events which occurred during the war or immediately after that should be recorded here.

Two more small stones were added to make a tile-like border at the foot of grandfather Hewitt's grave, for two more infant sons, well-born and inspiring hope, succumbed within hours to incompatible blood factors.

Toward the end of the war, Del started The Childrens' Shop at



Bank and Somerset Street. While hardly a profitable venture in the commercial sense, it was an experience and adventure never regretted.

With Victory in Europe, the shift to peace-time tasks began in Ottawa. My position was transferred from the N.R.C. to the Dominion Forest Service, a logical move for my work, outgrowing laboratory and nursery, had reached the large-scale plantation stage. But the Dominion Forester, Mr. D. Roy Cameron, remained in the Department of Reconstruction, and the Dominion Forest Service remained on a maintenance basis. My closests colleague, Dr. Carl Heimbürger, resigned and, after a period of frustration and a job offer from University of Florida, so did I.

In selling our house, in the summer of 1946, we entertained at least one prospective buyer of note, the Hon. Charles Stewart, former Premier of Alberta. He and I had an hour together in my study, a most interesting one — but hardly related to the object of his visit. We sold to Wing-Commander Frizzle.

\* \* \*

In closing this chapter I shall give one of, I think, my better responses to the question it asks. But it has been edited here and there — I was always heroic in the version told to my offspring.

#### THE DAY I COMMANDED THE CAMERON HIGHLANDERS

It was July 1944 and the British and Canadians had just taken Caen. And I was rushing, in jeep or on motorcycle, all over the Connaught Ranges, South March, Ottawa, carrying out my duties as Ammunition Officer,

R.C.A.S.C. There were innumerable rounds of .303 ball cartridges to go to the butts, there were a great many 2-inch and some 3-inch bombs in demand at the mortar range, and just about everything ~~that~~ was noisy but harmless at the maneuvers.

Ah those maneuvers, those sham battles! Blanks popping, thunder-flashes blasting, smoke generators spumming, Very light signals arching their colors in the sky. And young soldiers dashing about, the smell of powder in their nostrils and something of the real thing throbbing in their hearts.

Well, one day I dropped into the Supply Depot to see what delicacies had been over-indented for. A pity, I thought as I gulped down a half peach (canned, and easy down the gullet in its thick syrup), that these Supply chaps are confined all day to the Depot. Just sorting our groceries, cutting up meat, etc. All tedious civilian jobs. And with this war stuff all around the place. Especially the sham battles. Like out in Alberta where I was always camp cook at round-up time. Well, I would do something about it. I would be a good angel to the Supply boys. I almost saluted myself.

"A good idea, sir," said R.S.M. Holding. "Some tactical exercises will do those Supply chaps a lot of good. Better see the Supply Officer, though, before you go to the Colonel."

The R.S.M., an old Imperial Army man (wounded at Passchendaele), was my main source of military wisdom. He had recommended me for my first "hook," to start me upward. And had taken me under his wing. No doubt he wished to have his judgement vindicated — at least to the point that I didn't dishonor that first rank.

So it came about that on a fine afternoon Sgt. Jeffrey formed-up

his charges on parade.

I had been, I thought, a good drill sergeant; but that was two years before.

I took over the Company.

"Company, a-at EASE! Men, I've arranged to have Area B from 1400 to 1700 hours. We shall carry out an exercise in planned maneuvers, which will be regulated by my Very light signals. Sgt. Jeffery will be in charge of Our Own troops, who will engage the Enemy troops under Sgt. LaRoque. Company, a-aten-CHOW! Right - TURN!"

Most of the Company didn't move. Those that did were all tangled up in their rifle butts, which were still on the ground. A bad start — and, some inkling of things to come!

"As you were. Company, slope ARMS! Right TURN! By the left quick MARCH!"

So we were off on a quarter of a mile (or so) march to Area B. There my jeep (with driver) awaited with its rear full of pyrotechnics and all the things that make sham battles seem real.

Well, the plan was to have Our Own troops drive the Enemy from an advanced position in a clump of trees. They would lay down a smoke screen from a couple of generators placed upwind. Then there would be an artillery barrage of thunder flashes to cover the forward charge. Next, the rattle of musketry, a lot of it (to their hearts' content). Finally, the routing of the enemy. And all this, and what was to follow, controlled by my Very pistol (a big-bored thing <sup>that</sup> shoots colored lights way up in the sky). White over red (lay down the smoke screen), green over red (the barrage), red over red (have at 'em). And give 'em hell until green over green (Enemy retreats in disorder).

So I just sat there beside my pile of signal cartridges (the jeep had gone) feeling like the conductor of some great symphony, the pistol my baton. White over red (the Enemy lays down their smoke screen). I am going to have them counter-attack before Our Own can consolidate the newly-taken position. Great stuff, ~~this~~ god-like control of the fortunes of battle! Green over green (just listen to that barrage!).

(It was about then, I think, that I began to wonder ~~again~~ about those Very cartridges that had never been used, so far as I knew. I used to look at them in the Magazine Stores, wondering what they were. They were called "Dark Ignition." And I had brought one along.)

Red over red (here comes the Enemy). I sat there smiling at the sound of heavy musketry fire. The boys were having fun!

Green over green (boy, are the Enemy ever routing out Our Own!). But I'll see to that, by the God of War (me!).

White over white (Our Own are laying down a smoke screen). But this is getting monotonous. All very well for the combatants. But what of me, just sitting here popping off my omnipotent pistol . . .

My eyes caught the mysterious Dark Ignition as I reached for green (bang) over green (bang) — (barrage, of course). Then, after red over red (you must know it, by now, Our Own are giving 'em what for), I picked up Dark Ignition and fondled it.

Well, I was pretty tired of just red, white and green. I set my jaw, determined on Dark Ignition for a change!

Bang! There it goes, well, not quite. The thing was practically invisible, a big disappointment.

But look at Our Own now! They're chasing the Enemy 'way over into Area C. Give 'em the old whackeroo, boys! What fun!

Then I saw it. The fire. Where that fizzle, Dark Ignition had phutted out. The work, "Ignition," began to ignite in my brain. And the fire was burning, too. This scorched-earth tactic was not part of the plan. (And Dark Ignition was not a signal, it was an Incendiary!)

And look at those Supply boobs chasing around in Area C, just when I need them. Supply, indeed!

Well, off and on all afternoon I had noticed some infantry shenanigans going on in Area A. I took one look at my men sprinting along the distant horizon, and another at my roaring fire. Then I sprinted, too — over to Area A.

There I accosted a corporal of the Cameron Highlanders (our Brigade's crack infantry). The corporal's helmet was heavily garnished with branches, which gave me an idea. He saluted.

"Corporal," I said sternly, "have every available man provide himself with a big branch. Then beat out that fire in Area B. On the double!"

The fire siren was whining in the Camp as we ran to the fire. And the last flames were being beaten out when the Brigadier's jeep came to a screeching stop. This made the Highlanders increasingly vigorous with their branches, and I was one with them in virility as I strode up to the Brigadier and saluted.

"Everything under control, sir. The fire has been extinguished."

"Commendable action, Captain. And convey my commendation to your men for their part in it."

The Brigadier's jeep sped away, and I looked at my men trooping in from Area C. But I sent my adopted Highlanders away with commendations ringing in their ears.

That evening in Mess, the Colonel kept grinning at me between courses. And after dessert (canned pears in slippery syrup) he arose, grinning down one side of the table and up the other.

"Gentlemen," he said, "it gives me great pleasure to transmit to one of my officers the Brigadier's personal congratulations and commendation. Captain Johnson, you have today done signal credit to the Service Corps. Other regiments tend to forget that we in the Corps are soldiers. You, Captain, and your men from Supply Company have today been soldiers. Emphatically, soldiers! I would go so far as to say that no group of men in the Brigade could have met the crisis better. No, not even the Cameron Highlanders!"

## CHAPTER 14, A WANDERING PROFESSOR

It has already been noted that the summer of 1946 brought my resignation as N.R.C. Forest Geneticist, and the sale of our house. We also sold the Childrens' Shop — and bought a house trailer. Perhaps, in the light of things to come, there is something symbolical or even prophetic in that trailer. It was homemade, a bit makeshift but sturdy, and if motivated (by car) would go places.

The trailer was parked in Hubert O'Donald's yard. Hubert was an N.R.C. janitor who, as an ex-sergeant, was my military mentor and, as a man, one of my most loyal friends.

After a couple of trips to U.S. Immigration, Montreal, and a visit to the old homestead, Stavely, we started on our 1,700 trip to Gainesville, Florida. We were four: Del, Bob, Spike (the dog) and I.

It was a rather exciting journey but I restrain the expansive urge and settle for brevity.

We entered the U.S. at Ogdensburg, N.Y. and stopped for vehicle registration and custom clearance of our effects. The opening of our trailer door for inspection revealed that our effects had shifted en route into utter chaos. The inspector took one look at the apparent rubbish and admitted entry forthwith. Which may have been lucky for us, because there was a dozen bottles of home-made but pretty potent liqueurs in the chemical toilet.

Ascending the Catskill Mountains we found the trailer very heavy to pull. Reaching the Storm King Highway on the second day we expected easier going, but climbing Iron Mountain left us with a boiling radiator.

The descent was worse. There were no brakes on the trailer and the overworked car brakes now failed. I tried unsuccessfully to shift to a lower gear, and was contemplating a sliding crash into the side of a rock cut when I saw the gates of Pallisade Park ahead. After negotiating a very fast entry I was able to roll to a stop. I left my wondering family in the trailer and went to Montgomery (West Point) for a new master cylinder.

Arriving in Jersey City, a motorcycled member of the Hudson County police spotted us as a potential menace and escorted us, with screaming siren, to a trailer camp.

A blown-out trailer tire in Georgia led to an interesting search for a replacement. Our size (30 x 3 1/2, I think) had been out of general use for some twenty years.

We were glad to get to Gainesville.

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We had an interesting year at the University and in Florida generally, our recollections relating mainly to the sub-tropical climate, the trailer and, above all, Southern hospitality.

Upon arrival in Gainesville on Monday, September 2nd I was installed as Associate Professor of Agronomy and assigned to space in a University trailer park, formerly an army camp. Of the professorship, I shall say only that my work, teaching in genetics and plant breeding, was congenial and satisfactory — and that Dr. P. H. Senn was, both professionally and personally, the best boss that I ever had. As a compulsive sideline, I managed to do some research which was later published in three papers. On the trailer park, I shall be more expansive.



Our first few days were dry. We bought groceries and set up housekeeping, using a community kitchen and a couple of bathrooms with several families of married graduate students. Although the temperature and humidity were higher than we would have wished, we enjoyed our new situation. Then there was a cyclone warning. The high winds never reached us, but the rains did. It was like the monsoon (that we were to know 20 years later). The water in camp was knee deep, which we rather relished — until Del sighted a snake. We had to wade to the kitchen and the bathroom. I parked the Pontiac on distant high ground for daily trips to work, and for 10 days the front seat was a repository for my shoes and socks.

After some weeks we moved into a country house, and enjoyed its spaciousness relative to the 15 foot trailer. We also enjoyed the garden and, especially Bob, the surrounding jungle.

On weekends and holidays we took to the roads. In their turn we saw Jacksonville, St. Augustine, Cedar Keys, Silver Springs, Tampa, St. Petersburg, Singing Tower, Daytona Beach, Palm Beach, The Everglades and Miami.

We spent a memorable Christmas in Miami in 1946. Santa came to a motel on the Tamiami Trail and left an electric train for Bob under a makeshift tree. On Christmas Day we swam at Dania Beach and at Bob's insistence also at Hollywood. But the highlight was our afternoon and evening at The Kampong, the Coconut Grove estate of David and Marion Fairchild, whom I knew through some years of correspondence (Dr. Fairchild was the most famous of American plant explorers and Marion was the daughter of Alexander Graham Bell). Fellow guests that day were Dr. Schneider, physician to General Eisenhower, and Dr. Ochse of Indonesia.

Del underwent two major operations in Gainesville. Her insurance proved worthless, and the expense was well over a quarter of my gross earnings. The doctor was first class.

Apart from this illness (and Spike's bout with screw worms) we enjoyed living in Florida. But January brought the coldest temperatures we had ever known — indoors. The house was built for hot weather, and the "tin" heater could not be made to retain a single warm ember till morning. Temperatures of a typical morning would be 16° F. outside, and 40° F. inside. A hard winter for hothouse Canadians.

Another experience in Florida deserves special mention, that of living in the deep South — with the negro problem.

We were surprised to find in the larger stores that the cold-water drinking fountains were marked "White Customers Only". The colored folk were provided with a tap of ordinary water, luke warm. We were more prepared for the Jim Crow section in buses and in bus stations. Perhaps less so for the low-grade housing in the negro ghetto with its church and movie house, and no paint nor pride of ownership anywhere.

I was closest to this problem relative to John, our Agronomy janitor. He was a most devoted and faithful servitor, a fine man. He learned one day that Bob had become lost on the campus in attempting to come from his kindergarten school to my office. And every day after, John went to the street crossing when school was out to bring Bob safely to me. We were both very fond of John, and we showed it. And Professor Senn, who privately treated John with utmost kindness, was forced to warn of the danger of being branded a "niger lover".

Later, when we were packing our effects prior to leaving, I drove over to John's unpainted house to give him several household things. Among them was an electric toaster. This John gave back to me, with a gesture toward his kerosene lamp — no electricity.

I hasten to add that our "white" friends were among the very best that we have ever known. Every kindness was shown to us at all times, and especially during Del's two prolonged periods in hospital.

In February an offer of a professorship came from my old college at Pullman. It posed a difficult decision which, after much consideration, was one of acceptance. I was influenced mainly by the much better research position that would be open to me, and by my mother's failing health (she was then 76). Pullman was over 2,000 miles nearer to home than Gainesville.

So in June we headed north in the Pontiac, sans trailer, seeing much of the eastern seaboard, and of relatives in Ontario, Illinois and Colorado, en route to Pullman Washington.

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The Pullman of 1948 hadn't changed much physically nor in personnel since my student days. Mainly I missed my old mentor and friend Dr. Gaines; but I could still talk about old days with Zerpha, his wife. As before, Orville and Bertha Vogel were the first contacts on arrival and we were immediately installed across the street from them, 507 Oak Street, Apartment 2.

My old batching mate Bob Jeffrey was still in town, and his College Hill busses groaned up the grades and screeched down them.

Here also, I was an Associate Professor of Agronomy and still teaching plant breeding, with biometrics (statistical methods as applied to biology) added.

Much of my work was of professional interest only; but one assignment, being atomic in the popular sense, merits mention.

Able Test of Operation Crossroads was a sea-surface atomic blast set off at Bikini Atoll on July 3, 1946. Biological materials, plant and animal, were placed under various conditions and at different distances from the epicenter of the blast. These materials were later distributed to selected scientists for study. I received samples of hexaploid and tetraploid wheats that had been irradiated at Station B. These were grown in comparison with the same varieties irradiated with graduated dosages of x-rays (r units). The kinds and rates of mutation from the Bikini blast were very similar to those x-rayed at 16,000 r. Considering that the lethal dosage for man is taken as 540 r, this was an extreme lethal, a prodigious overkill. For some years this information was classified as top secret.

We almost attained to permanent residence in Pullman. There was a house, the Holbrook residence, for sale. It was beautifully located on high ground with a splendid view of Campus Hill. The price was \$14,500, but the real estate man said Holbrook (then in California) was getting impatient and would knock-off the \$500. We agreed to this, with a half-cash down payment. But before this would be settled a wealthy local farmer (who had his own plane and landing strip) came along. He wanted a town house and offered the full price, all cash.

Thereupon, I decided that my talents for bettering the lot of agriculture might be better applied in an area where the farmers were poorer, and more in need of what I had to give. Shortly after I got an offer from my old friend, Robert Newton, and now President, to return to the University of Alberta as successor to my old teacher, Dr. J. R. Fryer.

This I agreed to do, with some mixed feelings — and a salary cut from \$5,000 to \$3,900.

We enjoyed our year in Pullman. There were many old friends — and some new ones, notably the Rasmussens, Lowell and Ruth. Lowell was my office mate, and has since risen to Director of Agricultural Research. My research output was reported in one rather good publication.

On February 6, 1948, my Mother died, aged 77.

So at the end of June, we loaded up the Pontiac once more and, again, headed north. Still the four of us: Del, Bob, Spike and I.

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I had made a quick trip to Edmonton in April to bargain for a good contract. The main concessions to me was assurance of full professorial rank within two years, and good housing on campus. The latter, in those days, was of prime importance.

We arrived in Edmonton at noon on Friday, July 2, 1948, and drove directly to our suite, 8704 - 112 Street. Dr. Bob Hilton of a neighboring suite gave us the key. I reported to Dr. Art McCalla, Head, Department of Plant Science. Then we went shopping for furniture, especially a bed. Well, we bought a bed, stipulating, beyond all doubt or question, its

delivery on the following day. That night Del slept in the suite on three pillows and Bob and I slept in some cocks of new-mown hay just north of the University Hospital. Next day we waited for our bed. No show. A phone call. Be patient it's on the way. But on Saturday night Bob and I again nuzzled in the hay. We snuggled there also on Sunday, sleeping well because we were used to it.

Thus, in the success of my maturity, I returned to original ground to vindicate the promise of my youth.

We settled into our campus life comfortably, with furniture, and found ourselves in a friendly community of fellow suite-dwellers. The suites were attached in series and the married couples were prolific — so we were called Rabbit Row. There was one difficulty: no garage for the Pontiac. This led to cogitation. And when winter came, I sold the car for \$1,050 cash. The main idea behind this was to start a fund that would, in due course, take us on an extended tour of Europe.

As a comment on the post-war demand for cars, which were in extremely short supply, I mention that I had paid \$923 for the Pontiac nearly 10 years, and over 80,000, miles before.

With Dr. Fryer's retirement in 1949, I became head of the Division of Genetics and Plant Breeding. Dr. W.E. (Ted) Smith and (later) Dr. John Unrau comprised my staff. The teaching load was heavy and research work, which was an insistent drive within me, was done in overtime (unpaid, as all labor of love should be). So I did two jobs for the price of one.

During the busy time I wrote my first book, An Introduction to Applied Biometrics (published by Burgess, Minneapolis, in 1950). My recollection of its writing is of some hundreds of hours of solitude in

my West Lab office, my old Monroe calculating machine (slow-but-sure, exactly my counterpart) on my table, and Spike (devoted and patient, eminently my friend) at my feet.

On October 17, 1949 we bought a new house at 11735 - 91 Avenue. It cost \$14,000, and stood on the very spot where Geoff Padwick and I had our tent in 1933. Since we had other plans, we rented it to Prof. Bruce Collier.

April 1950 was exciting and, toward its end, hectic. The hundreds of final examination papers, a tedious succession of sameness, were finally graded, the manuscript was off to Burgess, the grant money totalling \$800 came to hand, Thomas Cook and Sons delivered the tickets, we got packed (somehow) and stored the furniture in the house on 91 Avenue. Our fellow suite-dwellers gave a party to bid us bon voyage — to Europe. And we left on the 30th.

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From the train we saw the flood devastation in Winnipeg. A stop at Ottawa, and then to Montreal to go aboard Cunard's R.M.S. Ascania on May 5. We sailed at 10:30 a.m.

There had been difficulty in getting tourist reservations, so we were travelling first class. It was wonderful, especially the meals. Making a fourth at our table was an elderly leather-goods representative from Leicester, a Mr. Raven, who was making his seventieth crossing of the Atlantic. We profitted greatly from his experience and kindness — but I didn't quite appreciate the Guinness stout ritual that I observed with him every morning at ten. The Atlantic was "like a millpond" for the crossing. Nevertheless, there was considerable seasickness, indeed, we had two cases while we were still moored at Montreal. Fortunately, the Ascania was a

slow boat, prolonging our enjoyment of all her fine amenities. We docked at Liverpool Merseyside on the evening of the 13th, and even then we had another night on board.

Arriving at Euston Station, London, at 4:00 p.m. on the 14th was one of my great thrills. London had been a place of my dreams; it is still my favorite city. Edith Padwick met us and we went to their place, Tower House, Harrow-on-the-Hill, where Geoff soon joined us. Thus began seven full weeks in England and Scotland.

Of course, much of what we did was standard sightseeing, but not all. We had, first, the advantage of our friends the Russells. Ewart Russell spent his life with the London County Council and was at once a master guide and a man of influence. Many closed doors were open to us, as that to The Crypt of Westminster Hall. In the House of Commons we saw Churchill, Atlee, Eden, Cripps, etc. In our travels we visited many famous scientists, R.A. Fisher, C.D. Darlington, F.A.E. Crew, C.H. Waddington, W.D. Hogg, G.D.H. Bell, etc. We travelled in part as Youth Hostellers and tramped many a country lane. We saw war ruins in London, Plymouth, Coventry and Dover before any extensive rebuilding. We saw the old England, relatively free of cars, and with well-bred children and orthodox young people. I suffered recurrences of my claustrophobia in the caves at Cheddar, and on the spiral stairs of Scott's Monument in Edinburgh. And had my Samsonite suitcase pilfered, as checked baggage, between Newcastle and London.

It was during my visit to research institutions, about a score of then, that I became aware of the great fraternity of scientists. Meeting



for the first time, scientists know each other from their respective publications. They start talking immediately on a familiar basis of common ground. I was treated as a person of some distinction everywhere I went. In particular, I have heart-warming recollections of my visit to University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, which did me most proud.

On the way to the continent (via Dover) we stopped at Canterbury and visited Wye College, where Dr. S.O.S. Dark used most of his monthly meat ration to provide an excellent dinner.

We crossed the Channel on June 26 (T.S.S. Invicta)<sup>arriving</sup> at Calais in 90 minutes. Then to Paris where we were lodged (by Cook's) at the Hotel Rochester. We did Paris in the usual manner, including a picnic, (with wine and cider) under the Eiffel Tower.

On the 30th we were off to Brussels for one very full day. Arriving in Amsterdam on Dominion Day, we were met by Dr. Wiersema (whom I had entertained just a year before in Edmonton) and driven to his home in Wageningen.

In four days, with an official car, we saw most of Holland, including the newly reclaimed North East Polder. We enjoyed Holland much more than France. Although the Wiersemas contributed much to this enjoyment, it was mainly due to the friendly, non-tourism minded Dutch people. Canadians were their favorite foreigners. I hope we have not lost this proud rating.

On the 5th we caught the Scandinavian Express at Amersfoort, destination Copenhagen. Many of our fellow passengers were Salvation Army ladies, surrounded by children tagged like baggage. One stop en route deserves mention, that at Hamburg.

The ruins and rubble of war were rife in Hamburg. Not even the broken panes in the station canopy had been replaced. I descended to the congested station platform followed by the S.A. ladies and their charges. Immediately there was a rush of motherly German women, frantic in their scrutiny of the children's identification tags. Waifs of war, orphans of occupation. And the war over five years before! It was heartwarming yet heart-rendering to see a mother find her child. And one mother, caressing her little girl, cried out, "Oh God! She can't speak German!"

I re-entered the train shaking my head, and choking.

We spent the night on the train, and I was up early to find the train approaching Copenhagen — on a barge.

A day in Copenhagen. We visited the Tivoli of course, and the Nymph. And rather stared, I fear, at cigar-smoking ladies.

Then we took the ferry to Malmö, and the train to Lund. My professional objective was to attend the International Congress of Botany in Stockholm, with a pre-congress tour of Sköne.

But, above all, we were in Sweden, home of all my ancestors! And I immediately began to resurrect fragments of my barnyard Swedish.

We were outside Lund station, our bags beside us. I called to the driver of a taxi for hire and told him, in "Swedish", to take us to No. 14, Sandgatan. He nodded and stepped on the gas. I ran after the departing car shouting "Vänta! Vänta!" (Wait! Wait!). The taxi dispatcher came up and said in perfect English, "He's gone to collect a passenger. You had better get another taxi". This time he gave the instructions.

As members of the pre-congress tour, we stayed five days in Lund. It was very gratifying to meet scientists from all over the world whose papers I had read, and who had read mine. It was like the meeting of old

friends. My initials must be striking for I heard "Ah, L.P.V." in many accents. Our headquarters were at the University of Lund, and we visited many of the scientific institutions of the area. On the 10th we went back to Malmö where the Swedish Sugar Co. entertained at the "Stranden" with a feast that required five hours from its first to last courses.

The next day we left for Stockholm just before noon, and I had the privilege of sharing a seat for six hours with the famous English botanist-geneticist-anthropologist (and husband of Marie Stopes of birth control fame), Dr. R. Ruggles Gates. I knew enough about his work to draw him out. He had just come from Lapland — and, he had the dirtiest raincoat that I have ever seen!

We arrived in Stockholm in the evening and went straight to our pensionat at Kommendorgatan 9. Our landlady was young, shapely, beautiful, and blond.

The Congress sessions opened next day. In the evening we went to a lawn party at Royal Palace of Drottningholm. When we lined-up inside the Palace to be presented, everybody mistook the magnificently dressed Palace Marshall for H.R.H. <sup>The</sup> Crown Prince. The real Prince (who acted for the ailing King Gustaf V, and was to become King Gustav VI Adolph within a matter of weeks) was very gracious, in an ordinary suit, and spoke excellent English. Bob, distinguished by his nine years, had a much longer conversation with H.R.H. than anyone else.

During the next five days we enjoyed an excursion to the Stockholm Archipelago (with botanizing on the Island of Utö), the first direct confrontation between Russian Lysenkoism and Western Mendelsim, a movie at the Rigelletto (Charlie Chaplin in City Lights), much fine food, and a bit

of shopping. I got well acquainted with many famous scientists, including A.F. Blakesley, R.E. Cleland, C.D. Darlington, Å. Gustafsson, K. Mather, E.C. Stakman, F.W. Went and Ö. Winge. And returning alone after a special evening session for papers by the Russians (because they arrived late) I managed to elude a would-be robber, who waylaid me in a dark and deserted park.

All in all it was a most interesting Congress.

It was at this point that I had the adventure respecting my long-lost cousin, but this will be relegated to the end of the chapter.

We returned to London On July 22, via Copenhagen, Esbjerg and Harwich and put up at the Cumberland Hotel. With only five days remaining, we concentrated on shopping: dishes (sent by freight) from Selfridges, suits from Fifty Shilling Tailors, and lots of antiques and books.

On July 28 (my 45 birthday) we arrived at Liverpool to board the battle-scared M.V. Georgic (our return voyage was to have been on the Franconia, but that vessel had gone aground in the St. Lawrence). And so to Halifax, Ottawa — and home to our new house in Edmonton. There was one pang that touched us all: poor old Spikey, left with Richard, had died in his lonliness.  
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JAG HETER LE ROY JOHNSON

Having the advantage of being in Sweden and with my duties at the Congress completed, I was determined to visit the Swedish home that my Mother had left 57 years before and, if possible, to find some relatives. There were two clues to go on. First, my mother's village was Bolmsö, and it was on an island in a lake in Varmland (or, was it Smöland?) Second, I

had a dim recollection of a cousin Ellen, whose married name was Johansson.

My inquiries at the railway and bus stations failed to turn up a Balmsö, and left some doubt that the place still existed. A sympathetic minor railway official saw a relation between the name of the village and Lake Bolmen, and suggested a ticket to the town of Reftele.

Not wishing to involve Del and Bob, in what might well be a wild-goose chase (Swedish form) nor, indeed, to be encumbered with them, I took off southward for Reftele alone. The plan was to meet their train three days hence in the Malmö station.

At 7:30 a.m. on July 18 I boarded the train. And having misgivings about my spoken Swedish in rural Varmland (or Smöland) I wrote out, with the help of a tourist phrasebook, a statement to be recited as required. It said: I am LeRoy Johnson, a Canadian professor . . . I am searching for my long-lost cousin . . . Please help me, etc.

En route, we changed ~~from~~ the main line at Nässjö and took off across the forests, rocks and bogs of central Sweden in single-car conveyance. This equivalent of a Canadian dayliner had two engines. I was sitting on the rear one, recently the front one, for it was pretty hot.

The conductor approached.

"Jag heter LeRoy Johnson," I said. "Är professor vid universitetet i Alberta, Canada . . . .

He put up his hand.

"Hold it! Hold it!" he interrupted "Let's talk English."

He confirmed<sup>"</sup> that I should get off at Reftele.

Reftele was very small and very rural. I approached the wicket of the station agent.

"Jag heter LeRoy . . . ."

The agent heard me through my piece. He seemed incredulous and touched by my story. He called to everyone within earshot, including a lady taxi driver. They gathered round and I repeated my piece. Then they went into Scandinavian gales of laughter, and asked for more.

But, I must say, they were rather nice about it. It was friendly merriment and I had won their goodwill.

Soon I was speeding away in the care of the lady taxi driver. Some miles to the south we reached a ferry landing. I could see Mother's island about a mile away, and in due course we crossed to it. We went directly to Bolmsö church, and I knocked on the door of the Pastor's house.

The Pastor spoke English — and, this time, so did I. He introduced me to his aged housekeeper, to whom he acted as an interpreter of details of my quest. She was the prime authority of the parish records. As she thumbed through pages I caught snatches of her mumbled Swedish.

"If this man is the son . . . . of Maria Johansdaughter . . . who left the parish in 1893 . . . then he is the cousin . . of Ellen Johansson."

Away we went in the taxi: the driver, the Pastor, the Assistant Pastor and I. A few miles brought us to a neat farm of oat fields, pastures, stone fences and red buildings.

I stood aloof from the others, who gesticulated with a large lady at the doorstep. Suddenly this lady, my cousin Ellen, broke away and rushed to me, a happy light in her eyes. She held me in a powerful hug and, in the contact, I detected a sob.

Two wonderful days followed. I talked (better than you might suppose) to Ellen and her daughter, Mrs. Blohm, about Mother and Canada,

and I identified members of our family in a picture of about 1916, the last account they had had of us. I went around the farm with son and heir, Gunnar, and experienced a remarkable recall of boyhood Swedish; I went with the Pastor to the Church and to the little Museum (Hambygdestugan), and I was invited to speak at the School, in English. (My English was supposed to be the real thing and I think that I was able to vindicate their English instruction). I met an old lady who had known my Mother and Uncle Pete and Aunt Anna.

I left by bus (shouting "Tack för Allt") that took me across the Island to a ferry that connected with Ljungby.

Back in Malmö, I checked-in at Hotell Adlon and then went to the station to wait. I stayed over-long "reading" a Swedish newspaper on the grassy bank of a nearby canal, and when I got back to the station I found Del and Bob in the over-zealous grasp of the uniformed Station-Master (a broad blue band, perhaps sinister, across his chest). Against all my tugging and expostulations ("Nej! Nej! Vi skall ~~go~~ till Hotell Adlon!") he forced them onto a bus. I had no alternative but to follow.

We were taken to the immigration hall connected to the Copenhagen ferry dock. Freeing ourselves we took a taxi back to the hotel. And, having seen something of Malmö, we were back at the dock next day. Thus ended our sojourn in the land of my forefathers — wonderful people, but I should have admitted, "Jag kan inte tala svenska!"

\* \* \*

Returning to the old homestead I found it desolate. There had been an auction sale and the farm had been stripped of its machinery, even

of hand tools — old friends of my youth. And the barns were empty.

I felt this desolation deeply, and was moved to express these emotions of my maturity in terms of how I would have felt as a boy, some thirty years before.

#### OUR AUCTION SALE

I was no help whatever to my family on that sad day when our possessions, categorized on the posters as Livestock, Machinery and Household Effects, were sold at public auction. At first, I had been rather proud of the poster (which we called a "Sale Bill") because, to my boyish mind, there was an aura of fame about it. We were displayed everywhere in print — and big print, too. But on the day of the sale I ran away, choking back tears, just before noon.

It was rather exciting to see so many people drive into our yard. Some were complete strangers, and they looked extra important. Many came in wagons or trucks; they were the ones that expected to have loads to take away. And it was exciting to hear the auctioneer, ". . . at nineteen dollars . . . any advance on nineteen . . . who'll make it twenty . . . gentlemen, gentlemen, you know value and I know that you won't let this go at nineteen . . . twenty I have . . . sold to this gentleman for twenty-five dollars and did he get a bargain . . . . "

I was fast coming to the conclusion that I wanted to be an auctioneer — when he up and sold Nellie, our favourite cow. The buyer was a big fattish man who was exactly my idea of a butcher.

The sale went from bad to worse and, when the sandwiches were piled at intervals along bed-sheeted tables, I raided a pile and ran.



I ate my lunch at a neighbour's straw stack beyond our gate. It was rather lonely and I would have appreciated my sisters; but they were just kids, watching the sale from an upstairs window. Most of all, I would have liked to have had old Beak. But he had died one dark night the winter before, and was buried in the corner of the garden. Well, I played around the straw pile until about five o'clock when the people began to leave. Some of the wagons were piled high with our furniture, some drew our machinery hitched up behind, others led away our cows and horses. A big truck turned south — and there in its stake body was Doc! Doc, the big white gelding that was leader of our herd. A strange truck, from far away, and our Doc its helpless prisoner!

There and then, I held my head and cried.

When all had gone, I went back to our gate. There was the hateful poster round the telephone pole. Now, in surrender, I rather relished the pain of reading it again. I wonder again why on a sale bill a "milk cow" becomes a "milch cow." And I was struck by the finality of the phrase, "without reservation."

My father sat with the auctioneer and clerk at the kitchen table. He was talking, but his voice was tired and unnatural.

I went to the barn and found desolation. Even the barn-smell seemed dead. Only empty stalls where last night our horses had been bedded down. Here the pole stanchion that Doc had polished by ten thousand rubbings of his big body, there his feed box smooth scalloped by his chewing jawbones, and here the vacant peg where for so long his harness had hung.

Nevermore, dear Doc, nevermore!

Every outbuilding empty, except the driveway in the big granary; it held the Model T in which, tomorrow, we would drive away.

I entered the house by the almost unused front door so as not to disturb the conference in the kitchen. My mother was busy, for we were to move first thing in the morning. She had always been busy, and thank God she could be busy now! And true to form, cleaning up for the people to come.

Upstairs, I roamed through dismantled rooms. I treaded boards where carpets had been, I blinked into the light of the setting sun that streamed through curtainless windows. I found my ~~brothers and~~ sisters rather more dirty than usual; and they looked at me with dull, questioning eyes. Then I looked down the stairs, to the very bottom where my sister had fallen. And I thought of how we had picked her up, fearing that she might be dead. Other memories flooded my mind, and I came downstairs with my heart unpleasantly high in my throat.

A supper of sandwiches that had started to curl, and of coffee out an oversized pot that didn't get sold. Then to bed in bedding that seems very thin underneath where the boards are.

Moving may be exciting; but the leaving is sad. There is only a romantic pang at first, when you face the leaving of your home; but when the moment approaches you feel a very practical agony. For a house, if it is a home, takes on life and grows after the builders have gone; it beholds our joys and our sorrows, chronicles our days, it entwines itself with our lives, and our leaving is an uprooting.

I dreamed that night of old Beak's grave being levelled by an alien plow. And early next morning I ran out and secretly caressed it.

## CHAPTER 15. THE MIDDLE EAST

The next two years were relatively quiet ones. We were so intent about getting settled in our new house, and getting acquainted with baby Elaine (born on January 17, 1951) that we became quite un-Canadian — we didn't buy a car. Then in the fall of '52 the quiet was broken in the form of a letter from my old boss of Central Experimental Farm days, Dr. L. E. Kirk.

Dr. Kirk was at that time Chief, Plant Production Branch, Agriculture Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome. He wrote to me on September 23, 1952, offering me an appointment as FAO Agronomist with headquarters in Tripoli, Libya. This was sudden, unexpected — and disturbing.

Late in the afternoon of the day the letter came I was digging my potatoes, a splendid occupation for reviewing a complex situation and making up one's mind. When I put away my digging fork at dusk, the plan was complete: my teaching and research duties and my graduate students, all tentatively provided for. Everyone at the University was helpful and all my potato - patch plans materialized.

We rented our house to a Texan oilman, Louis Leidecker. Inoculation shots were taken, also passport shots. There were parties, and my brother Richard came up from Claresholm. And our dog, Spikey II, was lodged with Art and Beth Paul. So, on Jan. 7, 1953, we boarded a Trans-Canada North Star for a 12 hour flight to Ottawa.

Leaving Del, Bob and Elaine with relatives, I took off for Montreal and London on the 12th via Goose Bay, <sup>Keflavik</sup> ~~Floresvik~~ (Iceland) and Prestwick. Fog over London led to an overnight train trip from Kil<sup>m</sup>ar<sup>n</sup>ock.

Four full days in London, mainly working on North African plants at Kew Gardens Herbarium, and an evening each with the Padwicks and Russels. One evening is especially memorable. I walked from my hotel, the Strand Palace, to St. Paul's and, returning, went to the Central Criminal Courts (Old Bailey) where I saw a light. Knocking, I gained admittance and asked to see around the Courts. Alf, the attendant took my half crown and, informing his mate to keep watch, took me all over the place by flashlight — even locking me in one of the cells of the nether regions.

The fog persisted and on Monday the 19th I was taken by bus from Northholt to Bovington. The BEA flight was forced to stop at Nice (fog over Rome) and I was put up at the Mondial Hotel. Next morning I saw something of Nice and its gravelly beach before taking off for Rome, where I put up at Albergo Anglo Americano, via della Quattro Fontani.

After lunch I telephoned FAO and was put in touch with Mr. Innes (a Canadian). He said "Say 'Fow' to any taxi driver and he will bring you here". The FAO headquarters building is a most impressive structure, built by Mussolini as the administrative center for his African colonies, a few hundred yards from the Col~~l~~osseum.

I was warmly greeted by Dr. Kirk, who told me that my assignment had been transferred from Libya to Syria. American Point Four had unexpectedly set up a project in Libya, which would duplicate my proposed work. He said that the change was to my advantage in that much better housing was available in Damascus, as compared to Tripoli, and that I could send for my family as soon as the Syrian government approved my appointment.

Dr. Kirk then introduced me to his secretary Mrs. Lydia Grey-Jones and the entomologist Mr. O. B. Lean (both English), and to administrator Mr. J.F. Dekker (Dutch), all of whom became valued friends. I shared Lean's office (No. 627). That night I wrote to Del and read up on Syria.

Rome was wonderful! I was entertained by friends old and new; I saw all of the sights, mostly by walking; I sampled the food and wine of Italy; I drove into the countryside with Lydia and Lean; I got a haircut at 250 lire, plus 300 for massage over my protest, 200 in unknown charges, and 50 as a tip, totalling 800 lire (about \$1.30). I completed my week of briefing and was ready for Syria.

But Syria wasn't ready for me. Del and family, lodged with her sister Mickey in Lachine, Quebec, were anxious to join me. She made air reservations hopefully, only to be forced to cancel them and make others, over and over again.

I was happy enough in Rome. I expanded my work at FAO. I went to St. Peter's and the Vatican a second time, to the Via Appia Antica a second and a third time, and to many new places. I went to St. Andrews Presbyterian Church. I even went to a movie ("Big Sky" at the Fiammetta). But still no word from Damascus.

Finally word came, in the affirmative, and I met my family at Ciampino Airport on Tuesday, February 10. We all stayed at the Anglo-American. Bob walked with me to the FAO every morning, and Del and Elaine joined us for lunch "on the roof". And of course, I took time off to guide them to the sights of Rome. Then at midnight on the 15th we took off for Beirut and Damascus.

\* \* \*

Mr. Carrol Deyoe, Chief of FAO Mission met our plane at the Damascus airport just before noon. We drove across a bit of desert and through a bit of the Ghouta to Baghdad Road where we put up at Mrs. Saadeh's Rest-haven pensionat. Then Deyoe took me to the FAO offices, where I met several of my colleagues-to-be, and to the Ministry of Agriculture and had my first cup of coffee with Akram Ricaby, Secretary General, and Jamel Mualah, Director. Finally, to a money changer in the Souk (the banks had closed).

It was all so strange, exotic — thrilling! I felt, I am sure, like Marco Polo had felt in Far Cathay.

From the start, we all loved Damascus. Next morning I went to my office shared with Dr. Van Liere, Dutch soils expert — and read again the terms of my assignment. I was a Research Agronomist "for 12 months to advise and assist the Government on the organization, establishment and initial operation of a Central Research Station, substations and demonstration farms".

We worked from 8:00 to 2:00 six days a week, missing Friday, the Moslem sabbath.

A few days later I met M. Peche of the French bilateral mission, who was working under the same terms. His government was to pay for the building and equipment of the Central Research Station. It now became clear to me that my function was to provide critical examination of French plans and to advise the Syrian government in making counter proposals. In all, I spent no more than a tenth of my time on these, my formal duties (though my reports belied the fact).

I saw a great need for crop testing, especially in wheat,

hybrid corn and barley. This took me to all parts of the country and involved a good deal of varietal introduction. So my Syrian story has little of office work but much of villages, farmers, experimental plots—and Bedouin tents.

\* \* \*

February was cold with some light rain and once a touch of snow. My office was very cold, especially the tile floor. I kept the lower left drawer of my desk free of papers and open — for my feet. Dr. Van Liere would ask his assistant, Akram Qadri, to see if he could do anything with the stove. It was a cylindrical drip-type, designed to burn mahsoot (Diesel fuel oil). There would be rattling noises and unwholesome fumes, but no heat. So Akram would call Badri Habib.

Badri would come in grinning and well bundled-up in heavy clothing, probably pilfered. And he would always manage to make more fumes than heat, until we asked him to desist. The fact was, as we learned later, that each heater in the building had a monthly mahsoot quota. And the rascal Qadri was able to save for his own ends very close to the whole quota for our, and many other, heaters. I call him rascal with affection, for I always liked him.

At the entrance to our building stood Mohammed, heavily dressed in a great coat that trailed on the floor, <sup>e</sup>pecking over a scarf wrapped round his face, and rigid with the cold. He was our "runner". To my knowledge he never moved until about the time of the spring equinox.

It might be mentioned that in Syria scarves are always wrapped over nose and mouth, for there is a fear of cold air.

On the day of the Haj pilgrimage (to Mecca) the Moslems hold a feast, Id al Adha. I got a typed note from Badri, "I wish to take this opportunity to wish you at the ADHA FEAST a very happy day". A moment later Mohammed handed me the carbon copy. I offered them a choice of gifts. Mohammed shrugged and got a couple of Syrian pounds. Badri said, "a bottle of brandy". He got it. I wonder how many pounds he got for it.

I was anxious to visit potential "branch stations" (quoting terms of my assignment) and applied for a Ministry vehicle. Our administrative assistant made out the form for me and sent it off, with a stamp. Four days later permission came back, well stamped — and signed by the Director of Agriculture, His Excellency the Minister of Agriculture, the Director of Administration and various garage officials.

The car came, a pick-up truck mounting a kind of camper, in charge of the driver, Saheed. They, motor and man, became my standard transportation, except for an occasional jeep, and I became very fond of both.

My first trip was to the Hauran region, lava-crust country south and east of Damascus. The crust, fragmented and weathered, provided black stones for fences and houses. And when the stones were lifted, the underlying soil was exposed. Carrol Deyoe, Kilany, and Bazrbashi (my young French-speaking counterpart in the Ministry) came along to introduce me to the country. We passed the spot where Saul met Jesus and went on to Ezraa, where there was the beginnings of a "branch station" in charge of Salah Halawi. It was the first of many visits. Carrol suggested that I should see Suweida, a prominent town with nearby Roman ruins and Jebel



Druze as a backdrop, which I found very interesting.

As it was now past noon we decided to buy provisions for a picnic lunch. I was just an observer. The others bought fruit, soft drinks, canned goods and, strangely, several large (20 inch) circular doily-like things which the storekeeper carefully folded. Rather a ritzy picnic, I thought, to require napkins. We backtracked looking for a picnic site on sun-warmed rocks. Debate on the site was prolonged to the point where we were approaching Ezraa. So we went to the station. Salah eagerly cleared a table and found chairs. We sat down and I put my napkin on my lap. Wallah! Salah is eating his napkin. I had heard of hungry Arabs, but this was absurd. Halte! Bazerbashi is eating his! Well, I ate mine, too — delicious Suweida bread!

During my first weeks in Syria, I had other experiences in which my first impressions were very wrong. For example, the Mushaa land on the eastern slopes of the Anti-Lebanon. This land belongs to the villagers and is farmed communally in long strips which are rotated annually among the farmers. The long parallel strips run up the hill-side and are plowed up-and-down, so there may be serious gully erosion in the wet season. All of the concepts of American conservation cried out for contour farming, across the slope. But hold the recommendation! Each farm provides bare subsistence for a family, and there must be equality in the productivity of each strip or some would starve. Equality is achieved by having the larger yields at the lower end compensate for the lesser yields from the higher reaches of the strip. A contour system would mean starvation for those depending only on the higher ground.

In the dry season, Dr. Van Liere, Akram Qadri, Bob and I visited Deir al Bakt, a village in the lava-crust country. We had been invited by Akram's friend, Teiser Zaabi, whose father, Abu Teiser was chief of the village. The chief was a very intelligent man, anticipating my criticism of his farming practises. He took me to a field, the surface of which was about half covered with broken lava, like thick flag-stones. It was planted to watermelons.

"You think that we should remove these stones", he said through Akram's interpretation. "But let us make a little test. See this soil between the stones. It is very dry. Now we look beneath the stones. The soil is damp. Without the stones, my friend, I would have no water-melons".

And so he dissuaded me from making the remarks that all my Western instincts cried for: that the stones should be removed to permit ease of cultivation.

It was on this occasion that Bob and I enjoyed our first Arab feast, and I as guest of honor.

But I leave that story for the end of the chapter.

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My mind now, as my interests at the time, always wanders off to villages and the desert. But I must pick up our story in the city.

Del was "expecting" and was anxious about medical care. We were fortunate in our landlady, Mrs. Gudrum Saadeh, the daughter of Danish missionaries. She took a motherly interest in Del and introduced her to the Doctors Nachman, brothers trained in Germany who had a clinic and small hospital nearby.

Damascus was fascinating. There was fascinating shopping in the maze of endless covered alleys of Souk el Hamadieh, which engulfed the great Umayyad Mosque and overflowed into the Street called Straight. Each passageway of the Souk (bazaar) was lined with open shops. Each shop was full of bright and shining things, with its keeper extolling their merits in insistent French or English. And the bargaining! We early learned to shout, la, shukrun! (no. thank you) or kteer! (too much). Exotic splendor everywhere, and very fine, expensive things in the gold and silver souks. There were factories, such as that of Nassan & Co. of the East Gate, whose brocade, brasswork and inlayed wood were displayed to rival Aladdin's treasure house. There were old caravan khans, old palaces, mosques, gardens and tombs. And there was the horse driven surrey to take you there and bring you back.

But there was the refugee camps, too, abutting the east wall just beyond Nassan's. There, 60,000 lived on the U.N. dole, hopeless in their hovels of burlap, paper, straw, and of tin from the ubiquitous petrol can.

The Deyoes left on March 15 for a holiday in U.S.A., and we moved into their apartment, just off fashionable Abu-Rummaneh Avenue. It was closer to Bob's school, the Anglo-American Community School in the Dutch Embassy, but farther from Del's doctor. And with the apartment, we acquired a little maid, Victoria, and a giant hunting dog, Nick.

I now prepared for a long trip into the Jezireh, the "island" between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. The permit to travel came at last on March 22 and I was all ready to leave next day, a Monday, and alerted Bazrbashi accordingly. But there was a light snow in the night and the

trip was called off. Boukra (tomorrow) said the garage officials. There followed a succession of optimistic boukras, all abortive.

On the 26th I made a trip to Hama with Ed. Raymond, U.S. Agricultural Attaché, to visit the Baroudi brothers. Nadim and Ahmad Baroudi were prominent farmers, and Ed and I were trying to induce them to undertake a large-scale test-planting of hybrid corn. This they agreed to do and we proceeded to order the seed, airfreight, from the States.

On our return journey we stopped between Hama and Rastane to talk to some farmers who were plowing preparatory to putting in large fields to watermelons. Some of these peasants were working, some were talking, most were sleeping.

Leaving our plowmen we saw a droopy-looking, middle-aged peasant moving slowly along the side of the road leading, or being led by, a cow on a long rope. The cow was thin and leggy with a remarkably small udder. We asked the peasant about himself and the cow and found that, since he was rather sickly, his only job was to take the cow along the road every day so that she could graze (no grass was in evidence). The cow, he said, had given about a litre of milk twice a day when she was fresh several months before, now she gave about 1/2 litre twice a day.

This man, probably suffering from nothing worse than malnutrition, was contributing to the means of the family, or perhaps of the village community, one litre of milk per day. In return he received his meals, shelter and clothing. This illustrates the direct relation between low per capita production and low standard of living.

On the morning of the 28th I got a telegram from Stavely, "Richard passed away 3:15 March 26. Sudden stroke". I sent a telegram to Gladys and worked as usual until 2:00. In the afternoon we hired a carriage and all went to the Ghouta to see the apricot blossoms. We thought and talked about Richard. But the shock of his death was not yet upon me.

\* \* \*

Another boukra came from the garage next day, but, of all of them, it held true. So on Monday, March 30, we were off to the Jesireh, just a week later,

I had been concerned about Del's situation in my absence and to this I now added concern about Dad and Gladys in their bereavement. I left a detailed itinerary with Del, so that she could contact me, by telephone, at any point along the way.

To say that we were off is a little misleading for we had motor trouble all the way to Ham~~ma~~. Poor Saheed, my driver! Bazrbashi gave him "what for" in Arabic and I consoled him with cigarettes<sup>e</sup>. When the car would run he stepped on it rounding curves recklessly with blasting horn. Then putt-putt again, and he would slap his forehead. I think Allah interceded at Ham~~ma~~ for from then on the motor purred, and Saheed and I resumed our reciprocal lessons in Arabic and English.

Approaching Aleppo, I called a halt to examine the red soil of the area. With more organic matter it would have been chocolate loam. In any case, with contrasting green it made a beautiful countryside. At Aleppo Basrbashi and I put up at the Hotel Al-Rambra, and there met our companion, Bashir Husni.

My diary of this 10-day trip, would no doubt be worth reproduction, but I choose to be content with the place names of our travels and a few selected comments. It soon became apparent that Basrbashi and Husni had arranged the trip in large part to meet old <sup>c</sup>school chums. This didn't reduce its value to me except that they were not available as interpreters when I had to carry on independently. And, after leaving Aleppo, I was never in the right place at the right time according to the itinerary I had left with Del.

My best recollections of Aleppo have to do with the Souk, the Citadel, a visit to the Agricultural School at Misselmich (with a penetrating discussion with Hassan Moughrabi on Bertrand Russel) and an excellent lunch with Egyptian cotton experts.

On April 1st we drove west to the Turkish border (which I stepped across), then to Harim and Salkin. Lunch with Salih Kighis (an old school friend of my companions) <sup>was</sup> followed by a visit to his farm. We saw his flock of sheep tended by a small boy of about ten. There was a cold driving rain and the lad was ill-clad. I made some remark about his suffering and Salih replied that the peasants were used to the cold and the rain, and so felt no discomfort. We dined and slept that night at the mansion of Aga Kayali brothers at Kafartkarim. Early next morning I happened to see a sheep butchered on the street according to Moslem ritual.

Next day we drove to Raqqa on the north shore of the Euphrates. Saheed took me to the best hotel (Basrbashi and Husni were with friends) and saw to it that I brushed my teeth with boiled water from the kitchen. I had the best room, shared with two Arabs who slept in their winter underwear, and with whom I had prolonged and successful (I think) communication in sign language.

Then across the bridge and on to Deir ez Zor. We visited the Agricultural Experiment Station and school. Changing our car for a jeep we drove to Hassechi where I was the dinner and overnight guest at the house of Hashu Hadjo. There was a picture of Lake Louise, by Thompson, over my bed.

On the 4th we drove north to Kamishly and then, in the rain, east to Derik in far northeast Syria near the Turkish and Iraki borders. There I met Izzid-din Haffer who told me about the "Cotton Rush" after the war. He got control of the village of Wanik. He knew of some who took over a dozen villages and thousands of acres — and made millions. Then back through driving rain to my hotel at Kamishly.

Next morning bright sunshine attracted me early to the street and there a Christian Kurdish woman, selling colored eggs, reminded me that it was Easter Sunday. We lunched with Jacob Najjar of the firm, Asfar and Najjar, who are the biggest farmers in Syria. We made a muddy trip to the firm's villages of Darbassich and Amouda, the latter almost against the Turkish foothills. We recrossed the German-built Istanbul-Baghdad railway on our way back to Kamishly.

An all-day trip on Monday. We picked up our car at Hassiche and found drier country southwards. But the dessert was green and it was pleasant to see camels and sheep grazing to put fat in their humps and tails against the dearth of summer. From Deir-ez-Zor to Aleppo, in the dark, arriving at 12:45.

On the 7th we visited Ministry people in Aleppo. Then south to Hamia to visit the Experimental Station at Marje Krame and east to Selemiya, where I dined and slept at the Agricultural School. This was in

the region of the Ismailites, poor Moslems of playboy Aga Khan's sect.

Then home on the 8th via Hamla and Homs.

\* \* \*

The next few weeks were taken up with routine at the office and short trips to the Agricultural School at Kharabo and other nearby destinations. I took to writing: a report for Rome, a paper on my ultrasonic studies with Prince George Obolensky for a scientific journal, a start on a new biometrics book for an unknown publisher of the future.

At Mrs. Saadeh's we met Dr. and Mrs. McClure, medical missionaries of the United Church of Canada, Toronto (a future Moderator of the Church). Another visitor of note, not to Mrs. Saadeh's, was the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Ibn Saud, who disrupted traffic for four days.

I had a remarkable haircut. The barber after a rather conventional job, got out a button and string affair like I used to play with as a boy. He started the button to spin, the string wrapping and unwrapping, buzz, buzz. He passed this torture contraption over my nose and cheekbones and ears uprooting all the fuzz growing on those parts. I gripped the chair to stifle my howls. Then he plastered my hair down with a heavily scented pomade and powdered my face pure white. I slunk away feeling like a torture victim and looking like a ghost, and went home by back streets to restore myself with a shampoo.

Bob and I climbed Mt. Qasyan, backdrop to Damascus, and came down with many rock samples and a bunch of red poppies.

On the 29th of April I rented an apartment from Mr. Chahlaoui, which was just off Abu-Rummaneh at the corner of Jadet Al-Amir Izzeddine and Jadet Fuad Salim, across the street from Ed Raymond's.



I now quote an excerpt from my diary, dated Monday, May 4:

"This day started early and fruitfully. Del awakened me at 1:00 a.m. Labor pains. This is it! I was about to 'phone the taxi driver, but realized that I could not tell him where we now lived. Went out to read the street signs by flashlight and was accosted by Raymond's sentry. Taxi nearby. He would guide us. So Del and I walked through a relay of three sentries all the way to the Tram street. To Dr. Nachman's by taxi at 1:45. Baby girl at 2:40 (3.575 kg). Betty Atherton drove me to the hospital at 8:00 a.m. Everything O.K. Del declared that the exercise produced the easiest childbirth ever."

This was a rather noteworthy event, so I shall enlarge on it at the end of the chapter.

Life in the Chahlaoui apartment proved interesting. There was Elise, the new baby, the daily trip back to Deyoes to feed borgal to Nick, the difficulties with Victoria, the dastardly thief who persistently pilfered our wash from the line on the roof, etc.

Then the sound of cannon on the evening of May 13. **The Israeli's** are shelling Damascus! But, no, it wasn't war — it was the advent of Ramadhan, the month of fasting.

The fact that Moslems do not eat in the daytime during Ramadhan is hardly a matter of suffering: they eat large meals before sunrise and after sunset. The denial of water during the day, however, could be observed as causing real agony on the part of the outdoor workers, especially when the month (which drops back 11 days each year by our calendar) falls in the hot dry summer.

In early June I made a trip with Feste (a Norwegian with UNESCO) and Basrbashi to Ezraa, Dera, Tel Chehab and points wouthwest to Yarmuk Valley. We took along a farmer, Saud, who wanted to visit his farm near Tell Chehab. Basrbashi ate more for lunch than any of us. He proposed to prolong his fast one day beyond Ramadhan. Saud fasted and took no drink. Late in the afternoon, while Basrbashi and Feste sat in the shade, I walked with Saud and his tenant across his hot dusty fields. His suffering from thirst was intense. As we drove home Saud sat in the front *as the sun sank I passed him the water bag.* between Saheed and me. When he stopped for air, I passed him a bag of apricots. The apricot stones flew past my face like machine gun bullets.

Speaking of fasting reminds me to say something of our social life. Dinners, and cocktails were frequent events with friends, of whom we numbered the Athertons, Coons, Van Lieres, Raymonds, Burdens, Deyoes (who returned on May 27) and Newtons (Don was a Canadian with UNRWA) as the closest. Then there were receptions at embassies and legations: British, American, French, Dutch and Belgian. The Anglo-American Club put on theatricals, picnics, etc. The British Council had an excellent library and held several very good discussion meetings. The U.S. Information Service was much less successful.

Bob and his school friends were now associating with Syrian boys from upper class families. He said the general run of Syrian boys seem to know only three English terms: "boy", "shut up" and "you're an ass!" *but we non-fasters kept regular hours*  
During Ramadhan our office hours were 10:00 to 2:00. However, with Ministry pressure relaxed I took two Sundays off, one with Van Liere (in his Alfa Romeo) and Bob to Beirut the other with a tourist party, and Bob, to Baalbek.

On June 2, Coronation Day, we went to H.M. Consul's "At Home" for 11:30. The London broadcast came in clear and the champagne in which we pledged the Queen, was excellent. In the evening we celebrated with H.M. Ambassador and Mrs. Montagu-Pollock at a most courtly ball held at the British Embassy.

Del and I were both studying French and our objectives, especially Del's, were furthered when we hired Freiza, our French-speaking maid.

Badri reminded me of the end of Ramadhan. His note said, "Best wishes for Id al Ramadhan". I took him to our sidewalk cafe, and gave him cart blanche. Coca Cola, chick-pea paste and cookies, all in double quantities, left him grinning his satisfaction.

One of my closest associates was Mr. Van Bottenburg, Dutch forestry expert with wide experience in the former Dutch East Indies. We were drawn together first by our mutual interest in forestry. I introduced, ~~by~~ way of England, a collection of nine of my poplar hybrids which were planted at Kharabo in early April. Second, we had a mutual interest in visiting the Holy Land. And so we got our various travelling papers in order, and changed Syria's money for Jordan's.

Henry Van Bottenburg, son and theological student, arrived from Holland on June 11 and we were off for Jerusalem the following day.

\* \* \*

We started at 6:00 a.m. and the Bottenburg Chevrolet sedan was loaded to full capacity. We men in front and Del, Elaine, Bob and Elise (in cradle, 40 days old) in the back. We went via Suweida where

we visited the Roman ruins at Qanagate, and bought some of the famous bread. Then on to Dera, at the border.

No exit visa's! Bottenburg passed out some baksheesh. Elise must have an exit visa for she is an arab! I paid some magical baksheesh. Jordan, here we come!

An hour later we took a wrong road, not to Amman but to Israel. The Jordanian border guard was asleep but his Israeli counterpart was alert and turned us back — in English. We arrived at Amman about six, and at Jerusalem two hours later. Room 34 at the American Colony Hostel brought a sigh of relief from Del, and all the Johnsons.

During the next two days we saw Jerusalem and Bethlehem — from Solomon's stables under the Temple to sunrise over Mount of Olives, from the Shepherd's field to the manger of the Christ child. Our guide, David Jasamin, knew all of the places and quoted in full the pertinent scriptures. We found a nursemaid for Elise, so Del was with us most of the time.

On Monday the 15th we were off for Samaria with David and a young guard from the Arab Legion. We visited Jacob's well (with a Palestinian refugee camp nearby), the Samaritan Synagogue at Nablus (met the future high priest and saw the ancient scrolls), and the ruins of Sabaste (Old Samaria). I tried to get a glimpse of Nazareth by climbing a hill, but was pulled back by the Arab Legion. And so a big day afield and back to the Hostel with two Roman lamps and divers of their coins.

The next day saw us complete our survey of Jerusalem in the morning (including the Archaeological Museum and the Dead Sea Scrolls),

and after lunch descend (some 1200 feet below sea level) to Jerico<sup>h</sup><sub>h</sub> and the Dead Sea, where we sat upright in the heavy brine.

We were up at five on the 17th and packed our baggage and souvenirs in the Chev for a start homeward at six. Down to Jericho, across the Allenby Bridge, breakfast in the Valley of the Jordan, on to Amman and Dera, lunch at Cheikh Meskine (both meals packed by the American Colony Hostel), and to Damascus and home at four.

\* \* \*

The journey to the Holy Land sealed my friendship with Van Bottenburg and he and Ed Raymond became my closest collaborators.

A most dedicated and diligent forester, Van Bottenburg had worked for months to get necessary legislation enacted and monies appropriated for a forest regeneration project. Regeneration, that is, of the forests that had disappeared a thousand years ago from the hills and low mountains of the Latakia hinterland, where good rains came in their season.

After seeding or planting, the first essential was to keep the goats off the hillsides. This now became prohibited by law and enforced by a squad of some thirty forest rangers. Some months later a complaint was made by a group of goatherders that a government official ( a forest ranger, of course) was persistently denying them their traditional hill pastures. Investigation by Van Bottenburg disclosed that the other 29 ranges were involved in exchanging traditional access to the hills for traditional baksheesh. The Minister of Forestry, through whom Van Bottenburg worked, undoubtedly got his split of the baksheesh.

I accompanied Van Bottenburg on his inspection of a direct-seeding project, which entailed dibbling of very large Balkan pine seeds into a north slope near Latakia. Arriving on the scene, we found that no work had been done. The men were lounging in their tents. They had developed a liking for the seeds, about the size of hazelnuts, and were then on the point of eating the last few seeds of the last bag — 300 pounds in all!

My friend went for a long walk.

Ed Raymond and I were luckier in our hybrid maize project. We had supplied seed of seven hybrids (adapted collectively to a wide area in the U.S. corn belt) to the Baroudi brothers of Tell Melah (Hama) and Yusuf Ibish of Hijaneh. The results were phenomenal. The hybrids grew over eight feet tall with ears a foot long, both measurements about double those for the native (beladi) varieties. The yield of the better hybrids was more than five times that of the native maize. The hybrid, Wisconsin 341A, was perhaps the best.

\* \* \*

On July first we paid Chahlaoui a month's rent in lieu of notice and moved to the house of Carleton Coon Jr. (son of a well known anthropologist and author). The Coon family were taking a four-month vacation in the States and were happy to have us in their place for the duration. It was a large (90 x 60) mansion with fine grounds and a small bathing pool. The high iron-grill of the front wall was quite impressive. There were 13 rooms with splendid furnishings, including lots of books and a grand piano.

To be in keeping with our new luxurious living, I ordered a new suit from a tailor in the Souk. The fittings were an ordeal. Boukra ad infinium! Del went to Haute Couture pour Dames for a new dress that was also a major construction. I also tried to buy a lawn mower for the Bermuda-grass lawn. No such implement in Damascus. Why save labor when you can hire a man for 50 cents a day? So I bought sheep shears! Fortunately, the lawn was small and the grass slow-growing.

On July 10 Col. Adib Shishakly was elected as President of Syria. We knew him after a fashion as he had lived next door to Mrs. Saadeh's. I met him personally on the day that someone threw a bomb over his wall. Shishakly had deposed al-Attasi in a bloodless coup in December, 1952, and had set up Col. (later General) Fawzi Silo as a puppet Chief of State. In the election his party, Movement for Arab Liberation, won 60 of the 82 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Shishakly was a good man and produced a new Constitution that would have helped the poor by taxing the rich. In December we celebrated the date of the coup as National Independence Day (with tanks, etc.) and I noticed a statue of Shishakly being erected on the Beirut Road. Three months later (after I had left) Shishakly was chased across the Lebanese border. This counter coup placed al-Attasi again in the Presidential Palace.

Speaking of the Palace, I was invited there to celebrate the adoption of Shishakly's Constitution. This mainly involved shaking the President's hand and drinking lemonade — out of dirty glasses. I had a bad bout of dysentery for a week and lost eight pounds.

Another repercussion<sup>S</sup> of the election was Basrbashi's banishment to the Army. He and some other Ministry officials had thrown in their

lot with the losing party. My next "counterpart" was a horticulturist, Shaheen Shaheen, followed about a month before I left by the deposed Minister of Agricultural Education, Kanafawny.

And Mrs. Saadeh's Rest Haven had a new houseplate, in pristine Arabic, Beit Saadeh.

\* \* \*

On August 15 - 17 I made a three-day trip to visit the Bouqua School, Latakia, and the Madkh Marsh irrigation scheme near Aleppo. I went alone, with Saheed, since I had no counterpart at the time. We went north to Homs then west past the old Crusader castle, Krak des Chevaliers, and northwest over low mountains to Tartous, on the Mediterranean. I stayed at the Hilal Hotel, where during the evening I bought a large bottle of Bock Beer, imported from Germany. It cost me \$1.50.

I was up at 5:30 next morning for an early start. Having heard that Tartous was the best place to buy sailboat models (made by retired sailors on Ruad Island), I told Saheed to find a shop that sold them. I was overheard — and there was a rush of local guides. Saheed shouted them off and denied any entry into the car. We drove away with guides clinging to the car and running behind. Arriving at the store, which Saheed found with no difficulty, I went inside and bought a fine sailboat for Bob. Outside there was milling and shouting. A large crowd had gathered. About ten guides were claiming fees for their services. Saheed proclaimed no service, no fee. When I got into the car, after much difficulty, I became the object of attention. I passed out coins freely and we drove off to wild cheering and general acclaim.



At the edge of town I bought, without uproar, a beautiful melon. Then we took the coast road north to Banias (the port at the end of the Iraki oil pipe line) en route to Latakia. A few miles south of Banias we drove along a fine beach and I called a halt. I went swimming, with Saheed guarding the car. There had been an oil spill and I emerged from the sea with both feet encased in heavy black scum. I sat down on a rock and began to scrape off the mess with a bit of stone. Saheed seeing this rushed over and, producing a jack knife with a long dull blade, took over the scraping. On his knees, he made me think of a slave.

Suddenly he sprang up, shouting. He had seen a long thin youth (LTY) making off toward the hills — with my bottle of Bock Beer! Saheed gave chase and I watched their silhouettes running and dodging on a high ridge. Finally, Saheed collared the LTY, retrieved the bottle, and brought him puffing into my presence. Then he abused him in Arabic invective, and cuffed him and spat upon him to satisfy my just annoyance. I restrained Saheed and asked him to sit down saying that he had had a long hard morning. Then I sent the LTY to clean the knife in the sea (Saheed watching him like a hawk). Finally, I had Saheed cut the melon and we were soon munching it in good fellowship. We laughed a lot about the incident, but I didn't go so far as to open the bottle of Bock.

Well, we went on to Latakia<sup>a</sup> and Aleppo, where I spent the night at the Ambassador Hotel. Up again at 5:30, did some shopping at Marco Polo House, saw the irrigation at the Madkh Marsh, and visited the village of El Is with its beehive<sup>e</sup> houses of sunbaked brick. And home at bedtime, laden with gifts.

On August 29 I was off early to the eastern desert with Dr. Van Liere and Fuad Jabbour in a jeep driven, when we let him, by one

Fayad. East of Nebek we saw a tell being cut down (sliced like a loaf of bread) to provide soil for levelling an irrigated field. I insisted on stopping, and spent a couple of hours on the 50-foot face, newly exposed. I identified strata, for giving location to my numbered artifacts (carved utensils, shards, loom weights, etc.) which are now at the University of Alberta. Had lunch near Humaria where we found water gushing from an old Roman chain well (foggara). Then on to Haware<sup>e</sup> where there is a ruin of a fourth century Christian church. All walls are intact and it is used as the town toilet, full of flies.

We reached Keryatine, a Christian town, as the sun was going down, and stayed with Fuad's people. At night several of the men went on a gazelle hunt. They ran down one poor creature, dazzled by the lights of the jeep. (This reminds me, with equal abhorrence, of Alberta "sportsmen" who currently club down running coyotes from their speeding snowmobiles). I walked through the town, buying a red sulk to wear over my face in the dust, and on into the moonlit desert. I climbed the tell that overlooks the patch of water called Wadi El Ain, where Rawala bedouin were camped with their camels.

I was awakened next morning by church bells, for it was Sunday, and went to a breakfast of gazelle mush - ~~w~~ee from last night's kill. I ate with something of the qualms of a vegetarian.

First to the black tents of the Rawala, to see the camels off to pasture, and the women preparing balls of jalla (camel dung fuel) which they placed in orderly rows to dry. Later we drove to the village capital of the Rawala tribe, Al-Barda, where we were received by the chief, Sheik Fawaz. Here the tribe had houses, a deep well with a power pump, and irrigated fields. But they still preferred their tents on this

beautiful morning. We were guests of honor in a ring of some twenty bedouin. I was the first to take coffee from the small communal cup, which was passed round right hand to right hand. I was glad to be first, for I didn't care to follow all those bearded bedouin. But the cup came round again. I raised my hand to indicate sufficiency before the third round.

We visited an old Roman dam on the way to Palmyra, our ultimate destination. There was a notch in the high ridge of hills to the eastward, and we passed through it. There to the southeast lay the ruins of ancient Palmyra, rosy-buff in the light of the setting sun. We put our baggage in the Zenobia Hotel, and then explored the ruins: the colonade, the Temple of the Sun, the Treasury, the Theatre. It was a warm night and, restless in bed, I visualized past glories of Palmyra, and made a mental sketch of a story that was to be.

Next morning we took a guided tour and visited a farm before starting homeward, following the guide stones that mark the Damascus - Baghdad road. I drove most of the way, past the Well of Ulayanya, past the army post of Sabda Biyar, across the open desert. I was forewarned of the approach of the occasional car or bus by a high cloud of dust, and would veer to the windward (north). So would the other. Once, in winning, I got several miles off course and had some trouble finding the markers. And so the scientists returned to Damascus.

\* \* \*

There were other trips: again to Baalbek, many times to Beirut, several field trips with Ed Raymond, more visits to bedouin tents.

We moved back to Beit Saadeh at the end of October. I was busy with plans for importing and testing Pullman (Washington) wheats, evaluating experimental results, and getting reservations for repatriation travel (with Cook's Beirut).

We saw the first clouds (since April) on October 5 and the weather became increasingly cooler, but the rains held off for another month. I got a large air shipment of Pullman winter wheats from Orville Vogel and distributed seeds and experimental plans to several of the progressive farmers that I had met in various parts of Syria. These included Moudarris (S.W. of Aleppo), Jacob Najjar (Kamishly), Baroudi brothers (Ham~~ma~~), Yusuf Ibish (Hijaneh) and Louay Kilany (Homs). I also put in a test at the Ezra~~a~~ station. The Ministry officials were greatly displeased with my distribution to farmers. They wanted a corner on the seed supply, for private profit. When my colleague, Dr. W.E. Smith went to Syria some years later he found some of these wheats in successful commercial production. He attributed this to the energy and competence of the farmers, and to the fact that no one was able to exploit an exclusive seed source.

With the cool weather and approaching departure, we stepped up our buying at the Souk. "George" of Asfar and Sarkis helped us to start our collection of oriental carpets.

One disappointment of the fall season related to the Dahdah Brothers, travel agents, manufacturers and archaeologists. I had bought many things from them, for myself and for the University (Dr. Walter Johns arranged a grant for me). Having found unknown Roman towns and connecting roads on Dr. Van Liere's aerial photographs, I had arranged

with Antoine Dahdah to participate in his excavations — when his brother Georges got back from his Parisian honeymoon. But Georges was, apparently, having the time of his life and never did get back, before my departure.

The family left for a Mediterranean cruise homeward on November 16th. We went to Beirut the day before and stayed at Hotel Metropole. The 16th was hectic, especially in terms of baggage and baksheesh. Thirteen miscellaneous bags and thirteen well-paid porters, from the hotel to the customs. I was not allowed in customs shed — no ticket. Thirteen items of impedimenta each with its baksheesh from customs to ship. I was not allowed on board ship — no ticket. I went back to the hotel, and watched the Excambion sail away into the sunset before returning, disconsolate, to Damascus.

I learned afterwards that I should have handed out substantial amounts of baksheesh for entry into customs and onto the ship. This didn't occur to me because these high, resplendently uniformed officials seemed much above such handouts. The chap on the ship looked like an admiral.

Speaking of baksheesh reminds me of alms. The street beggars in Damascus were mostly old men or women with babies (borrowed, some said, or just wrapped-up objects). They were unobtrusively and appealingly mute and not numerous. I always kept a supply of three piastre pieces in my pocket and never left a beggar empty handed.

\* \* \*

Before leaving the Syrian scene I should mention the security measures against aliens. Prohibition of photography was of three kinds:

strategic objects such as bridges, government buildings, and railways; military zones, even though it might be in the open desert; and old rundown buildings, slummy areas and poorly-dressed people, especially women. Security police would strip films from tourists cameras. I was very discreet, but of course there were some forbidden pictures among my four hundred. Then there was surveillance. I was systematically watched and followed over many months. Usually the operator acted as a street vender, who I would lead on a merry chase through the Souk and into areas quite unproductive to his trade.

I now prepared to leave my work in the hands of my final counterpart, Kanafawny. Poor Kanafawny! When I first arrived he was Minister of Agricultural Education, and in charge of a system involving about ten schools of which several have been mentioned, Kharabo, Selemiya, etc. Unfortunately, he borrowed a power pump from Kharabo. This would measure discharge in cubic feet per second, and was loanable at ten Syrian pounds (about \$2.80) per day. Kanafawny tested the water potential of a well on his farm, and on the same day the Director General, Akram Ricaby, applied for the loan of the pump. He was told that Kanafawny had it who, in turn, was asked to deliver it to Ricaby rather than return it to the School. Nearly three months later Kanafawny was billed for some 800 pounds. The pump was signed out to him -- and Ricaby still had it. Kanafawny asked Ricaby to pay the bill (less ten pounds). Ricaby demoted Kanafawny to Principle at Selemiya. The dispute continued and Kanafawny was reduced to elementary teacher. The final indignity, presumably, was his assignment to me. In any case he was an amiable and able man, and did a good job for me.

My air reservation for the Cairo flight on December 10 was cancelled at the last moment. An Egyptian Trade Commission suddenly decided to go home and took over the flight. But I did leave next day, with Deyoe, Shaheen and Kanafawny to see me off. Arab music all the way, and thick cheese sandwiches over Suez.

As we came to a stop at Cairo airport (at 2:10 p.m.) I was first at the exit. The door opened and a chap with a knapsack spray gave me a super dose of DDT, up and down my person. I greeted my Regional FAO superior, Abas Morsi, choking and in tears. The DDT treatment was futile — I never saw more flies anywhere than in Cairo.

I stayed at the Gazireh Palace Hotel and spent a day and a half doing the usual tourist routine: bazaars, Museum, Citadel, Mosque, Pyramids. I went out to Sakkara (*step* pyramid and tomb of sacred bulls) and Memphis (reclining colossus of Rameses II). And I was spat upon by youths at the Mohammed Aly Mosque.

Off to Rome, via Athens, early on the 13th and put up at my old hostel, the Anglo-Americano. Another week in Rome, more outings with Lydia and Lean, the buying of some choice paintings and of course, reporting to FAO on a job (I hope) well done. Then to London, for a day, and to Montreal, where I joined my family on 22nd.

And so back to Stavely and the old homestead for Christmas.

Then back to Edmonton, and reunion with a happy Spikey II for New Year.

\* \* \*

There was an incident in the FAO building, Rome, that remains vividly in mind and may be worth preserving here.

#### STUCK IN AN ITALIAN ELEVATOR

Our day's work done we entered the lift at the sixth floor. Lydia, Lean and I and about a dozen others of well-mixed nationalities. Descent of about two floors — and a half. Uproar in the cage. Lydia translating Italian outcries. "Alas! we have stopped between floors!" Cried the Roman at the controls. Cries in several languages, pleas to the Roman: "Get us out of here!" "Do something about it!" He did. He jerked and wrenched — and displayed aloft a broken control handle. "We are lost!" A great sobbing moaning outburst from an Italian lady. Lydia translated, "She says that we shall all be suffocated!" I felt my old claustrophobia upon me and was screwing-up courage with thoughts of "Get a-hold of yourself, Lee, don't panic".

The Roman took to pounding the cage with <sup>the</sup> broken handle and shouting, of all things, for a blacksmith (so Lydia said). I calmed down and looked about me. Everybody crying frantically at the top of his or her voice, and gesticulating. The Asians, Africans, and southern Europeans, that is, not the English. Lydia was calm, Lean's upper lip was very stiff indeed. They might have been waiting for afternoon tea. Then I noticed that the cage was ceiled with an open wire mesh. I pointed. Lydia translated "See, we can't suffocate". A pause. Then a gradual resumption of disraught emotions, evidenced by the non-British.

After about twenty minutes, somehow, we moved down to the main floor.

"Rather an interesting experience, that," said Lean.



Brief mention has already been made of the circumstances surrounding Elise's birth, and more details promised. Here they are.

#### ELISE'S REMARKABLE DAMASCENE BIRTH

Our family is, I believe, rather noted for its foresight and planning. When we were in Deyoe's apartment, in March and April, Del acquired a regular taxi driver. She 'phoned his number and he came, promptly and without fail. He was warned about a night call. He looked at Del's figure and nodded, his eyes alight with understanding.

Well, we moved on May 1st to the Chahlaoui apartment. May 4, just before 1:00 a.m. Labor pains. This is it. Phone the taxi driver. But I realized that he would automatically go to Deyoe's. I would have to re-direct him. Taking the flashlight I went to the street. I had marked down Jadet Fuad Salim and Jadet Al-Amir Izzeddine (our corner) on a piece of paper when I was accosted by Ed. Raymond's sentry, Abdul. I explained in French, English, Arabic and sign language.

"Taxi pour madame (a great sweeping arc of the hand in front of the abdomen), à l'hôpital".

Abdul grinned and repeated the arc sign.

"Taxi la, hunak," he said, pointing toward Tram Street,

"Near?" I asked (making a short, low-trajectory sign) "Or far, loin?" (making a long, high trajectory sign).

The answer was "near" (by sign).

I ran upstairs and told Del that a taxi was to be had nearby. We came down together, with the long-packed bag, and placed ourselves in Abdul's hands.

We walked toward Tram Street. I flashed the light on license plates of parked cars (taxi plates were in red). Del stopped for a rest. I repeated the low-trajectory sign, hopefully.

"Oui, naam," said Abdul light-heartedly.

We went on and came to a cross street, evidently the border of Abdul's territory. He blew a whistle.

"Mahmud! Mahmud!"

Mahmud came running and, after lengthy instructions in emotional Arabic, took us in tow.

One more boundary and another sentry escort.

I was rehearsing in my mind such obstetrics as I knew, side-walk style.

We came at last to Tram Street. And there was the taxi, nearly half a mile from home. Del was safely in the hospital at 1:45.

Back at the apartment Abdul joined me as I was about to pay the taxi driver. He objected violently to the fare. Finally, I managed to slip double the amount unnoticed into the taxi driver's hand. He drove off, leaving Abdul triumphant. And I rewarded Abdul handsomely for intervening on my behalf.

The 'phone rang at three o'clock.

Baby girl at 2:40, weight 3.575 kg. Everything O.K.

To Nachman's at eight to see Linda Elise. Del declared that the exercise and excitement brought about the easiest childbirth ever!

So much for Johnsonian foresight and planning.

\* \* \*

On my first trip to Deir al Bakt in the lava-crust region of the Hauran, the village chief, Abu Teisir, honored me with my first feast, in the old Arabic tradition.

#### A FEAST AT ABU TEISIR'S HOUSE

We came in from the fields and mounted to the second storey of Abu Teisir's house, and from a deck floored with poplar trunks entered the large guest room. We sat on rugs, leaning back luxuriously on brocade bolsters. Abu Teisir resumed our discussion of moisture conservation, by leaving the fields half-covered with the black blocks of stones. Then he broke off, taking the matter out of worldly hands by saying, "Allah wills that they shall remain".

It was the signal for the feast to start. A low table was set in the center of the room. Two men brought in a large tray bearing a whole boiled sheep, boiled rice and boiled wheat. This was supplemented by side plates of folded Suweida bread and a kind of tomato stew. There were spoons for the stew. I sat down with Abu Teisir and his eldest sons. Bob, too, as he was my eldest. One of the younger sons, in rolled-up sleeves, now proceeded to tear the sheep apart with his hands. We each received our portion in long, stringy strips.

I, as guest of honor, shared with my host the brains and eyes. My eye was an inch in diameter and of an unwholesome grey-blue with a brownish eye-spot. I wondered if it would squish like a ripe tomato when I bit it. I never found out for I put it away, surrepticiously, in my pocket!

After our meal we stepped outside to the deck to have a servant pour water over our hands, and share a common towel.

The younger sons and lesser guests followed us at the table, using our spoons. There was still another sitting, after which the remnants of the feast were removed, and taken to the women and children.

After reclining with a bowl of grapes and indulging in some further conversation (while Bob enjoyed a donkey ride), we left Deir al to a chorus of mah sahlamies. To which we returned our khotricums.

I was to enjoy five or six other feasts, mostly in Bedouin tents. And on one other occasion was served a sheep's eye. And, again, I was thankful for Western garb — with pockets!

\* \* \*

The Bedouins are the true Arabs, living in the old ways of Abraham and of Elijah. I met them in their tents and in market towns. Wiry men, usually fairly tall, always sun-burnt and sand-blasted. Devoted to an ancient culture in which only the strong survive, they seemed infinitely superior to the soft mercantile Arab of the cities.

#### THE BEDOUIN OF THE BLACK TENTS

The hardy Arab of the desert ekes out a precarious existence from the barren sands. Summer is his season of hardship and suffering for then he lives wearily at his well, driving his sheep and camels daily afield in quest of scant pasture. In his tent heat and hunger must be endured; in the desert the danger of raids on his herds. The trip to the market town (musabilah) is a torture and brings in little

for his surplus male animals. He watches for Suhail (Canopus) low in the southern sky for it foretells of al Wasm, season of the rains (mid-October). Clouds gather. There is night lightning and thunder. The rain pours down. There is water in the wadis, and the desert comes to life.

Now the nomad is happy, for he moves his black tents in the wake of grazing. A new clean camp every ten days, with fresh grass all round. There is fresh leben and milk for the cup and bustard and gazelle for the pot. The women put on their best frocks and walk among flowers. Praise be to Allah!

Then May and the dread season of withered grass. The nomad comes back to his watering place, to the long summer of sedentary privation. And he dreams of al Wasm — of the living desert.

## CHAPTER 16. AND MIDDLE AGE

The period 1954 to 1963 was a quiet one, spent at home and in England. I had time to write: eighteen scientific papers, two books and a score of short stories. I gained seniority professionally, was appointed to high positions in the church, and was venerated by divers nieces and nephews. In short, I became aware of the impact of middle age.

In 1954 Del, Bob and I were in great demand for giving lectures (illustrated) on the Holy Land. I think that I held forth in almost every Protestant church hall in Edmonton, and, dealing with the United Nations, at most service clubs. My memo pad for the year showed that we collectively gave 54 talks, and there were some, as Bob's at Sunday school, that were not recorded.

Professionally, I now began study and research in the field of biometrical genetics. This involved some fairly-complex, specialized mathematics, a subject that had always fascinated me. During the next ten years I was able to make some discoveries relating to the inheritance of quantitative characters, such as yield, a much neglected field. Fourteen reasonably respectable scientific papers resulted, some <sup>in</sup> co-authorship with Dr. Rustem Aksel who became a close colleague in 1957. The barley variety Centennial arose directly from this work.

The next year brought a fiftiety birthday. Its impact was solely psychological, and I think ~~not~~ too much of that.

Dad died in October, 1955, at age 83.

During the two-year period, 1956-58, such time as could be spared from heavy loads in teaching and research, was devoted to the organizing of The Genetics Society of Canada. I worked almost single-

handed in this and was rewarded by a Society duly launched in Winnipeg in February, 1958. Our new organization became a co-sponsor, with the Genetics Society of America, of the X International Congress of Genetics, held in Montreal in August of the same year.

In May 1958, after a particularly heavy year at the University, I developed diabetes, as Mother before me. I was incarcerated in hospital for four days and occupied my time, when not supplying blood or urine samples, by starting a novel. It was the first time in memory that I had four whole days free, and the attempt at a novel was inevitable.

In August of that year I went to Montreal to participate in the X International Congress of Genetics. And on the 29th with my duties over, I took the first flight to Toronto, from where I took off again on a five-hour non-stop flight to Bermuda, arriving at 3:00 p.m.

Thus began five delightful days, for Bermuda is the most delightful place in the world. I stayed at the Kenwood Club, Hamilton, and had most of my meals at the Portugese restaurant, The Spot. On the first full day, I saw the sights. On the second, I discovered a beautiful beach on Grape Bay, south shore of Paget, where I swam alone in the surf or sun-bathed on the pinkish-buff coral sands. And those activities and inactivities account, pretty well for the next three days. Except, of course, that my novel, starting in Ottawa, now moved to Bermuda.

Then on to Nassau on September 3rd to put up at the Columbus Hotel and to dine at the El-Bo Room. My diary says I washed my drip-dry shirt, hung it in front of the air conditioner, and went to bed at 10.

The Bahamas are also delightful. On the 4th I "walked" Nassau in the morning and went to Paradise Beach (well-named) in the afternoon.

Next day brought fascinating shopping on Bay street, the packing of a box, parcel-posted to Edmonton, and a return to Paradise Beach. Then to Windsor Field early on the 6th for a flight to West End on Grand Bahama Island.

From the start, there was something fantastic about this trip to the Grand Bahamas. The Bahama Airways Ltd. plane was a "compact" four - motor model so small that only a single bench-step was needed to board it. I sat in the entrance to the pilot's cabin. The pilot was a red-bearded piratical specimen who might have been George Bernard Shaw at the turn of the century. There was no room for a stewardess. We took off at 8:45 and ~~sk~~ skimmed over the Berry Islands and their beautiful blue-green<sup>n</sup> shallows, and soon let down on the landing strip that served both West End and Freeport. The facilities consisted of a general-purpose shack and a windsock.

We took a taxi some miles to the West End Club. This Club had been built by Billy Butlin as <sup>a</sup> venture to attract a much wealthier clientele than frequents his Holiday Camps in Britain. He had sold it to an American syndicate, but his name was still on the table service.

I spent practically all of my three days and two nights in the pool, on the beach or watching fish in the dock lights. The Club was about half filled, but the American inmates never left the bar, dining room or dance floor. There were two exceptions: the Ballantyne family from Springfield Illinois and Mr. Wright from Staten Island, New York. The young English Recreational Director, whose tennis courts knew only the caretaker, asked me on the second night to escort her to the dance. I was her bodyguard. There was calypso singing and dancing and the game of passing under a broom-stick that gets lower and lower. The



Resident Nurse from West Palm Beach sat at our table. As the evening advanced her inebriation increased.

Next morning, when placing our bags on the taxi ramp for the flight to West Palm Beach, the Resident Nurse was surprised that I didn't have a case of excise-free liquor. She rushed away to get a case of Scotch, which was mine in name only.

From West Palm Beach I took the bus to Gainesville. Everything had changed, hardly a familiar landmark remaining. I spent two days with my old friends, especially Dr. Senn and the Watkins. Then by bus to Tampa and by T.C.A. to Toronto — and home.

\* \* \*

The summer of 1959 was a busy one, almost hectic. We were preparing for my sabbatical year in England: our house had to be rented, the data I was to work on had to be organized, and all the 101 things that prelude a year-long absence devoted to travel abroad.

We rented our house to five young professional men and moved out on July 1st for their convenience, we ourselves putting up for a month in a University suite. Our boys were excellent tenants, although we had one complaint about a Saturday night that extended into Sunday morning with open-air revelries in the garden.

Up at dawn on Saturday August 1st. A final walk with Spikey II, lodging him with the Boyds. Breakfast with the Pauls and on our way at nine. The old (1951) Dodge's fuel pump began to sputter at Lacombe but we made Calgary in time for our goin<sup>g</sup>-away picnic at St. George's Island, with Mable, Archie and family. On to Claresholm next day for a going-

away chicken dinner. And, feeling full, to Carmangay where nephew Doug (in the garage business) installed a fuel pump and a tire. Highway 91 to Shellby (Montana) and east on 2. We were really on our way.

We tented three nights in the U.S. and once in Ontario. On the latter occasion I wanted, as always, to tent in the woods; but Del was afraid of bears, so we tented, long after dark, near the village of Wellwood. We were up at dawn, fortunately, for we had pitched our tent on the grounds of a convent. Our exit, I believe, was unnoticed. Then to my old stamping ground, Petawawa Forest Experiment Station. Mr. Holst, my successor, took us on a tour (with Mr. Mathews of England, whom I had visited at Farnham in 1950, and who sent me the poplar hybrid cuttings when I was in Damascus). I saw many of my hybrids, in many genera. They were now substantial trees and I had the feeling of having made my mark. We had a picnic in the evening at Loon Lake and a swim in its cool waters.

We arrived in Ottawa on Saturday the 8th where we stayed until the 24th, with almost daily going-away dinners and picnics. Then, after putting up the Dodge in Everette Hewitt's garage, we went to Montreal to board the Empress of France and sail away on the 25th. We now added the ship's menu to all of our going-away feasts, and landed at Liverpool on September 1st a very-much overweight family indeed.

\* \* \*

We arrived in the middle of one of England's finest summer-and-fall periods, and were to enjoy a full six-weeks of nearly cloudless skies.

In 1950 we had passed through Birmingham, on a misty day, and thought it dingy and readily relegated it to "Black Country" status. We

now took up residence in Professor Court's house (the Courts were in Australia) at 113 Selly Park Road, Edgboston, and I took over an office (as Visiting Professor) in the University Department of Genetics. And very shortly we were all prepared to swear by Birmingham as a very good place to live in.

In the Department I worked with Professor Kenneth Mather, F.R.S. (whom I had met at the Montreal Congress a year before), Dr. Jinks (shortly to leave for a year in California), Dr. Michael Lawrence and Dr. Oddvar Aresvik (a visitor from Norway). A most congenial and helpful group.

We got the girls enrolled at the Bournville School, endowed by <sup>d</sup>Capury's (the chocolate firm) and situated at the edge a public park, their gifts to the city. It was in every way a fine school, and Elise's first. Bob was taking a high school correspondence course, from Edmonton.

On September 4th Bob and I caught the 8:00 a.m. train from Snow Hill to Paddington. We took the Underground to Picadilly to arrive at Ford Motor Co., 88 Regent St. at 10:30. Then and there we took delivery of the Consul — Dover white with a Ludlow green top, that I had ordered (and paid for) from Edmonton. My old room-mate, Dr. Geoff Padwick, joined us for lunch, and then headed the new <sup>car</sup> (2.2 registered miles) down Picadilly and Edgeware Road to Highway A41 and Birmingham. Both Bob and I took over ~~a~~ when London traffic abated, developing our instincts for driving a left-hand drive car on the left side of the road. Geoff was our overnight guest.

With a new car and beautiful weather over the Midlands, we travelled widely. As the Americans say, "You name it" — we had been there. Special mention should be made of our trip to visit my niece,

Marjorie in Nottingham where her husband was in the R.C.A.F. and housed at Canada Estate. On the same trip we visited a friend, Mrs. Tolmie in Derby, and took her for a drive to Dovedale.

We were many times to nearby Stratford-on-Avon to see the Shakespeare plays in the Memorial Theatre. The plays included Midsummer Night's Dream, Coriolanus<sup>a</sup>, King Lear and Othello. The players included Charles Laughton, Vanessa Redgrave, Mary Ure, Albert Finney, Lawrence Olivier, Edith Evans, Robert Hardy, Anthony Nichols, Paul Robeson and Sam Wanamaker.

The Dickens Fellowship and English-Speaking Union, each provided meetings and social occasions. The Dickens group was especially kind to us as visiting members of the Edmonton Branch of the Fellowship, and in our own right. We are still in touch with them after more than ten years.

Our neighbors were hospitable and helpful, especially the Barfords, next door. We went to St. Stephen's church and helped with the harvest festival. Rev. Hickin, the Vicar, first called on us one frosty night when I was at the fireplace sampling one of Bob's potent concoctions, straight from his Bartender's Guide. I was embarrassed; but the Vicar was cold and thirsty and, after the second glass, very complimentary of the mixture.

We made several trips to London. There were visits to Nuffield Lodge, Regent's Park (the Nuffield Foundation had awarded me a fellowship), to Canada House and my bank next door. And we went to London just to be in London.

*H* Our most notable London occasion was in Drapers' Hall on December 7th when we and other selected Commonwealth personages, mostly colored, were received by Princess Margaret. We had tea en masse. The Honorable ladies who organized it were stiff, formal and apprehensive; the Princess was relaxed, informal and charming. I would have defended her, had the occasion demanded it, to my last drop of blood.

We had a fine Christmas with tree, presents, turkey and plum pudding. The girls got me up at 6:10 a.m. to open the presents. It was a fine bright morning (after the sun came up) and I went to the garden to pick the last rose (a yellow one) and the last three apples. We spent the evening with professor and Mrs. Mather, with drinks, refreshments and projected slides. It was a merry Christmas.

At the end of the year we packed our trunks and sent them off to Sutton, Surrey. Farewells at the Department on Saturday, January 2, 1960. On the 4th, with the girls wedged in among the bags in the back seat, we ~~sped~~ along the newly opened M-1 to London. Lunch in Twickenham, Sutton at 2:30 and all settled in Number 6, The Byway, before supper.

\* \* \*

Del and I had called on Mrs. Marjorie Williams, at 6 The Byway, a month before. We found her most charming, and her house, too. It was arranged that, while she and her daughter were sojourning, January to April inclusive, in sunny Spain, we would be her tenants. (at 8 gns, a week).

Our stay in Sutton (or Carshalton Beeches) was a heart-warming experience. Marjorie, as she was known, was much esteemed by the half-

dozen householders of The Byway, and we seemed, as the inmates of her house, to be welcomed to her place in their hearts. British reserve? Bosh! There were never better neighbors than we had in The Byway. The Powells alternated with us in taking their boys (Chris and Andrew) to Barrow Hedges school. And the Pringles, the van Gennaps, the Jeremys (helped Bob with his course) the Denhams were good neighbors in the very best sense.

And we inherited Marjorie's help: Mrs. Melham who came in to clean, and Mr. Sheppard who looked after the garden.

My time was taken up with writing at home and commuting to London (12 minutes to Victoria). My writing involved a long paper on my researches in quantitative genetics (data analysis having been completed in Birmingham), my novel and, sometimes, short stories. In London, I spent much of my time in the Reading Room of the British Museum (Ticket No. C11487, which is still in force). Often Bob, and sometimes Del, came with me and we did the museums and theatres. Bob became a clubman, Soho style, and induced me to look in on various below-stairs haunts, such as the Flamingo (which I remember for its good jazz and its Canadian musicians).

We visited Mrs. Russell (Mr. Russel has passed on) in Egham and the Padiwicks in Hazlemere, and had many visitors in Return.

Bob and I took long walks on the downs. Once we walked to Banstead Wood, 22 miles — and wished that pubs were open in the afternoon.

Early in April Del and Bob went to France for two weeks, Elaine and Elise went to Broombank, a holiday school in Chichester, and I stayed home and finished re-writing the novel. My only breaks were the Symposium on Microbial Genetics, at the Royal Institution, the Boat Race, a trip to Cambridge and my favorite pastime of bookstore browsing.

Together again, we prepared to leave The Byway (for Bournemouth). We sort of blasted off. For weeks I had taken exercise and provided fireplace fuel by sawing away at an old tree ~~trunk~~ trunk in the garden. But the very butt defied further division and on our final night I put the whole in the fireplace and had a fine hot fire which consumed about half of the butt. At dawn I re-lit the wood and aroused the family for final packing. Ring, ring, van Gennap on the 'phone, our chimney on fire! Dial 999, fire at 6 The Byway, five firemen on the job in three minutes, ladder on the roof, water down the chimney, sergeant (in white helmet) probing in the attic, fire out, thank you very much, don't mention it — just doing our job.

Well, we cleaned up the mess with our neighbors digging in with a will. Farewells all round. Good-bye Byway, hello Bournemouth.

\* \* \*

We had twice visited Bournemouth and had been pleased to lease Waratah, the Underwood house, 7 Studland Road, Alum Chine. Mr. Underwood was an officer with ~~P~~and O making regular voyages to Sidney, and now his wife was going to spend four months in her native Australia.

On April 21, we arrived at Waratah, a fine house only a hundred yards from the Channel, which could be seen from the upstairs windows.

Once the baggage was in the house, Del had to do the unpacking — for the rest of us rushed to the beach. Several miles of sand, a wide buff-brown strip between the sea and the cliffs. And notching the cliffs at intervals a succession of narrow ravines called chines. Off to the

southeast is the Isle of Wight with its Alum Bay and The Needles boldly in view. To the west Sandbanks, hiding Poole and its harbor (in Dorset). And southwest we could see the Isle of Purbeck with its Shell Bay, Studland, and the Foreland standing high out of the sea.

Next day we went swimming. The Channel was awfully cold. I don't think it ever warmed up during the summer, but we soon acclimated to it. Then the girls and I first took the route, along the beach then up Durley Chine, to St. Michael's school, where I enrolled them. We were to retrace that delightful mile innumerable times with undiminished pleasure.

To the landward we found attractions equal to those of our seaside, nearest and most notable the New Forest. But just beyond, 30 miles north, is Salisbury. Another mile and you are at Old Sarum, and another eight at Stonehenge.

Our own Alum chine took us, past Skerryvore, to the shops of Westbourne. And I would have to be in a hurry indeed if I emerged from the Chine without stopping at Skerryvore. For that was R. L. Stevenson's Bournemouth home where he wrote Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Kidnapped, and A Child's Garden of Verses. The house itself was demolished by enemy bombs during the war, but the garden remains with its plaque and miniature lighthouse. There I would stop to write or to read from the Verses.

On June 24 I got a letter from P.R. Macmillan, accepting my novel In the Time of the Thetans but suggesting alterations. On July 5 the MS was finally complete and I boarded a Royal Blue bus for London. Further editorial changes, even to the euphony of words in a sentence,



whirled in my head. When we stopped at Winchester, I bought a ball-point pen with a fine point and black ink, and small changes were made en route when we stopped. In London, I took the Underground from Victoria to Blackfriars. Then I went to St. Paul's and made the final improvements. Perfection achieved, I went to Fleet Street and committed my papers, with reverence, to an irreverent publisher.

I wrote about 15 short stories during our four months in Bournemouth most of which were later published, one before I left England.

Needless to say we all enjoyed our stay in Bournemouth, perhaps as much as any other equal period on our lives. We drove to all the places already mentioned and many more — to mention one, Christchurch with its beautiful old Priory Church. We went west all the way to Land's End, Cornwall, east to Portsmouth, and northeast to points of interest along the London roads. We had many visitors, among them: Mrs. Gudrun Saadeh, our old Damascus landlady, and Mrs. Majory Williams, our more recent Byway one; Del's sister, Mickey, and family from R.C.A.F. Station, Metz, France; and many Canadian friends, who were widely invited in advance.

In Bournemouth itself there were the Winter Gardens, the Pleasure Gardens, the parks, pavillions, and piers, the museums, the shops and arcades — but most of all the chines, the cliffs, the sands and the sea.

For me the bookstores were as important an attraction as any, especially on a rainy day. Browsing in a good second hand bookstore, with a definite view to buying, is undoubtedly my favorite indoor sport. I kept a record of books sent home (to the University) in the period December to August. They made up 47 packages of six pounds each (postage 2/6). When I got back I found my desk hidden with a cairn of 55 packages (there were eight prior to December).

*at Southampton*

On August 22 I delivered the Consul<sup>Λ</sup> to be prepared for shipment. On the 23rd we tidied-up Waratah. I had planted a garden in April, especially beds and borders of flowers, and I wanted them to look nice when the Underwoods returned. Del made the house immaculate.

And on the 24th we boarded the Ivernia, the Consul in the hold, the rest of us in Staterooms A102 and M125. We were sorry to leave, yet happy to be homeward bound. Happy, except for thoughts of Spikey II, who would not leap to greet us on this return.

\* \* \*

We took on cargo at Havre and souvenirs at Cobb, and had a smooth crossing to dock at Montreal in the early hours of the 31st. Off the Ivernia at 9:30, to drive away in the Consul at 1:00 and make Ottawa for dinner with Mrs. Hewitt.

We retrieved the Dodge and gave it to Bob. Off to the west in two cars on September 3rd, Bob driving his first car (mileage 50,302.5) proudly. Taking the Trans-Canada route we tented along the way (except the girls, who had a very good bed in the Dodge), making Calgary on the 9th and home on the 10th.

The others went to bed early, but I stayed up to listen-in on the Calgary-Edmonton football game. I gave in at the end of the third quarter — our Eskimos were leading the Stampeders 30 to 10.

\* \* \*

When Dad died, and while reflecting on his life and Mother's, I wrote a piece in tribute to them. And to all the oldtimers I had known,

for I generalized to include cherished memories of some of their old friends. Of all my writing, it is the only piece that I am in the habit of re-reading.

### REVERIE

Fall again, already, and summer dying . . . dying. A time when an old man thinks of life. At nearly ninety, one doesn't look ahead: that road is too short — time for only a few faltering steps. But the road behind! Ah, that's a long trail, reaching back and back in a brightening course. And one's footprints thick upon it!

Memories of the youthful time, of the first hard frost of a fall long ago. Fall plowing over for the year, and that meant hauling wheat. A warm time shovelling at the field granary, and a cold ride into town. And still colder as winter came on: wheels creaking in the snow, horses steaming ~~from~~ their nostrils to coat their sides with frost. Then the rewards of grain cheques at the elevator and of money in the bank!

And then the long winter evenings of leisure — and the courting. Courting! The cutter, like a large armchair on runners, with shafts offset outrigger-fashion so that the single horse (Old Jim!) trotted in the runner track. And the buffalo robes. And Jane. Jane! Again the happy ringing *laugh*, the warm young body and the shining eyes. Then the school house dance. Bright lights (hissing gas lanterns), fiddle sawing away with a droning organ in the background, nasal sing-song of the caller (" . . lady round the gent and the gent don't go . . ."), and Jane. Married in the spring, spring in all its tender and hopeful beauty. Of all memories this is the pleasantest. And the kindest — in dreams, the kindest, for now Jane is gone.

And the Sunday dinners! The warm kitchen (Jane's Kitchen!) and a famous aroma. That's the fried chicken! No need to mention the potato salad, but something should be said of the angel-food cake. Baked yesterday and turned upside-down over night. Beyond that — indescribable! And the creaking crank of the freezer. A little more salt there, and a tamp or two at the ice. Real ice cream! Ah, for the old food — and a younger stomach!

Now another fall. Chores all done for the night, with the lantern blown-out and hanging on the kitchen wall. Evening at home with Jane and the children. Cold enough to light the heater in the parlor. The mantle lamp on the table and a ring of young faces. They changed as they grew up— and, yet, they never changed, not really. Never changed any more than Judy did. Scarlet fever . . . Strange about Judy: the happiest and liveliest of all, as though she had to live in a hurry. Ah, the little Judy of sixty years of dreams! The soft delicate light of heaven, and she is there, happy as ever, and waiting; waiting with the old love, and something deeper, shining in her eyes.

Then another scene of this same sad fall, Poignant, too, because of Judy. A point of light shining across dark fields, burning all night, night after night. That was the Bensons, watching at little Allan's bedside. The crisis came, and went — and Allen lived. He's a lawyer now, right here in the city.

Now shadows of war gather and darken, and in them Eddie's boyish face, smudged but shining. Eddie, Jane's favorite son. But this vision won't fit into any proper place or reason. The smoke trails and crashing death. All vague and unreal — and unthinkable. But it happened, at Caen. And there is a medal, posthumous, to prove it.

Yes, at ninety an old man looks back, back along the trail that has led to this hushed rest of age. And he rests content. Content to dissipate again in the revels of the past, with visions of loved ones all around. Content to have weathered a full life, to have reaped joy from the sunshine as he did wisdom from the blast. And, thus content, to wait patiently for the end.

\* \* \*

There are many stories of our English sojourn that I would like to tell, but I must be content with one. I choose this incident because it is typical of the surprising things that these Britons do, and of the wonderfully genuine and uninhibited people that they are.

#### THE UNSUSPECTED TREASURES OF FOREST HOUSE

On June 24th, having just received the publisher's acceptance of my Thetans, I took Del over town to celebrate. We parked near The Square and visited some of the shops. Then we decided to walk to the Russel<sup>l</sup>-Coats Gallery on East Cliff. En route we passed a mansion set in a large walled garden. On the gate was a sign inviting the public to enter and share the beauties of the garden. But we went on to the Gallery.

Sir Merton and Lady Russel<sup>l</sup>-Coats, one time Mayor and Mayoress, gave their mansion and its art treasures and museum pieces to the City. Later they added a large gallery to the building and filled it with pictures. The collections are first rate and we spent a most enjoyable hour with them.

**MISSING  
PAGE(S)**

## CHAPTER 17. DRIFTWILLOW

Being back home meant for Del getting our house in order, for Bob a job, for the girls school, for me putting a neglected garden into a reasonable condition — and, of course, catching up at the University. The cairn of 55 packages of books on my desk was re-inforced by a year's mail — mainly prospecti of superlatives from textbook publishers.

My family now evinced concern about my utter devotion to work. After a year away and the wonderful Bournemouthian restoration of energy, I became in their eyes a kind of human dynamo, and was about to burn-out my rotor — or something. Anyway, they induced me to join the newly launched Glendale Golf and Country Club. I was to relax on the links. Well, I was immediately elected to the Board of Directors and attended about as many meetings as I played holes of golf.

Nineteen sixty-one was a year of routine, notable only for a successful part in an international meeting of biometricians at Raleigh, North Carolina, and the contribution of a chapter to a book published by the National Academy of Science. Sixty-two was also routine, and may be left at that.

Sixty-three was a rather good year. My book Biometrical Methods was published as a monograph by the Association for the Advancement of Science and Culture (India), It also came out in textbook form. Then there was Driftwillow.

Early in May we found a cottage property, for sale, on Lake Wabamun. A beautiful place. The cottage interior was all in natural knotty pine. There was a large room separated, by a magnificent fireplace,

into living, dining and kitchen areas. There were large windows, three bedrooms, a deck and a full basement. We bought it and called it Driftwillow.

Over some years I further improved it and its grounds, with joy in the doing and pride in the result.

Looking back at this idyllic time, I find myself unable to describe it — except by a series of vignettes.

So I give you the Driftwillow Papers, in five parts.

\* \* \*

#### DRIFTWILLOW DREAM

A peaceful place of whispering trees and lapping water, a sanctuary of sweet scents and singing birds, a curve of sandy shore and the bright pool of the little cove. Off-shore a miniature private island with a drowsing lilac tree. And in the depths beyond a sunken wreck.

A place to be dreamed of.

It is Driftwillow, my dream come true.

We are all creatures of imagination, given to dreams of future greatness or the fulfillment of some extravagant ambition. But such dreams serve only to lay up a store of disappointments, for they are opposed to reality.

Yet, disappointment is no deterrent, and we dream on. So the question is, how can we make our dreams come true? Here as always the answer lies in the verb of the inquiring sentence. It will always be a strong verb, and none stronger than "make", for this workman's word holds



the whole of civilization in its single syllable. And think further, friend, have you not heard that magic phrase, "do it yourself?"

But come, dreamer, to see Driftwillow, the dream that I made to come true. It is only forty miles away!

We leave Edmonton by the Groat Road's deadly twistings and by 107th Avenue, upon which all the houses have turned their backs. Thus we gain the Jasper highway, and go westward through Spruce Grove to the Wabamun Park turnoff. Turning south we relinquish asphalt for gravel, asphalt for gravel in all its symbolism.

A hairpin bend at Kapasiwin store turns us northward. We follow a rustic lane until its flanking file of hydro poles stop to look at the railway tracks. We stop, too. But we are looking at Driftwillow's white picket - winged gateway. A step further and we look through its opening at the blue-and-white cottage, at the lawn sloping down at Willow Cove, which mirrors Windrift Island.

Tread softly here, my friend, for your way is over my dreams. But please come in, for I know you are a dreamer too.

The nautical rope-railed deck of the cottage is a good vantage point for viewing my domain. Directly westward are the beach, the cove and the island (to which is tied Yo-Ho-Ho, the refloated rum-runner's wreck). Each has its story, for I built them all. To the right, the willows troop down to stand in the wet sand, all but hiding the railway tracks. To the left, the Point (our peninsula) stretches out to reach the offshore reeds, which from here seem a solid dark-green verge of land. The land rises gradually from the Point to the Lickey (our woods) to provide a succession of wild-life habitats that make-up the Sanctuary. In all, some eight acres.

Then there are the sun and the wind and the sky, and a multitude of living things.

These all together are Driftwillow.

Here, I am one with White of Selborne, Thoreau of Walden, Burroughs of Slabsides and Hudson of no fixed abode. And in the background, as patron of our company, is the saintly Francis of Assisi.

Here, as I labored I have been one with nature. The creatures round about have accepted me. Thus, when I used up the extra cement to make flagstones, Mr. Robin hopped across the expanse of wet concrete, imprinting his seal of approval with a row of trident tracks.

Here, in the hush of evening we see Mr. Muskrat returning to his house on the Point. We never see his outward passage, only his returning V in the twilit cove. Why does he come to our cattails? He has plenty at home. Or, perhaps the railway embankment has allurements. But what can that steep and stoney shore have in the muskratty line?

Here, of an evening we look out across the bay to Calgary Power's plant, rising clean and white like some newly-washed castle, its moat streaked with heavy molten gold, with silver glitterings in the blackness of the shoreline. And in the clear amber of the cove, a perfect inverted silhouette of Windrift Island.

Here, I have returned to Eden.

In the beginning we all had Eden, but somehow we have lost our way. We find ourselves surrounded by artificial wants and false burdens. We live in unnatural hives of stick and stone and steel. There, in our allotted cells, we hide ourselves from the light of day. There, we scheme and slave for a superfluity of gadget rewards, all essentially electrical.

When it all gets too complicated, friend, come join my company!

\* \* \*

#### WINDRIFT ISLAND

One of the first things that will intrigue you at Driftwillow is the mystery of Windrift Island: the why and the how of its erection. Well, the answers reduced to three words are Wish, Wind and Wart. The Wish was a fierce desire for an island, the Wind was a terrific westerly, and the Wart was of the virus (Plantar's) variety, on the sole of my foot.

The Wish had been burning in my breast since boyhood, but the Wart first made itself felt toward the end of May, 1963. It put an end to golf and reduced my customary stride to a hobbling gait. I was an object of commiseration.

But in mid-June when I took to the water I found that immersion above the waist brought buoyancy, taking the weight off the Wart. Thus, buoyantly, I roamed the inshore waters of Wabamun no longer an object of pity, but one of wonder.

Well, to get on with the westerly. It came of an evening in early July from the Calgary Power quarter. For the moment wind was king: all creatures were in hiding, the trees bowed down, and we rushed out to rescue wildly flapping linen from our line. It brought us a roaring wet night -- and also a piece of reedy real estate. This was a heavy mass of matted roots and five-foot stems about sixteen feet square. It was high on my beach and quite immovable.

With my carpenter's saw I began to diminish this mass, piece by

piece. Each piece was about two feet by two, later to be shorn of stems and upended to start two lateral walls. These led eventually to enclosing the cove. But that is another story.

Finally, when reduced to about eight feet square, the block of reeds released its grip upon the shore and floated free.

Now, some fifty yards offshore there is a ledge, parallel with the shoreline, where the depth drops suddenly from four to six feet. Here I brought the remnant block, anchoring it with driven piles and a central pole. To the pole I nailed a flag-shaped piece of old plaid skirt.

Then I called Elaine, Elise and Trixie.

This "instant island" was wonderful. The girls and the dog played on it for days, with me packing a ton of lakeweed (also brought in the night by the westerly) underneath as added support. But gradually it settled lower in the water and finally, with even the weight of one girl upon it, it sank beneath the waves.

We had named it Windrift Island. It had been a thing of beauty mirrored in the lake at twilight, had become a part of Driftwillow. And it must not perish.

Well, I had been taking my offshore walks for some weeks, exulting in my levitation. And what, besides beer bottles cast adrift by fishermen ancient and modern, did I find at the bottom? Logs. Water-logged logs.

Now I dragged heavy, slippery shiny-black logs on the beach by the score. I cut them into two approximate lengths, six feet and eight feet. The long ones I abutted to the spongy island to lengthen its long axis (north and south); the short ones went across. Then another layer of long ones. And so I built up two solid wings on either side of Windrift Island.

The spongy center took a miscellany of shorter pieces, especially the four-foot tops that had been cut from the piles when the railway trestle was in the building (1910). They were still perfectly sound, their tapered tops showing the compacting crimps of the pile driver as though that great hammer were still on the job.

Thus, a solid island of a sort rose out of the lake, decked out with a central clump of cattails.

The following winter saw several ice-borne truckloads of pit-run sand and gravel heaped over the log base. The logs were completely hidden, and there were special dumpings to give a gently sloping beach on the near side.

In the spring, the cattail sods were removed from the central core, and couple of tubfuls of earth poured in. Earth to support a solitary lilac tree and (to give a tropical lushness) a rhubarb plant.

So, that summer, we had a solid Windrift Island. We basked on its broad back of warm sand under a flutter of leaves. We dived off its steep ends and moored our boats in deep water on the far side. And there was the scent of lilac in the quiet air.

\* \* \*

#### THE SANCTUARY

From the beginning, of course, Driftwillow itself has been a sanctuary of sorts. A retreat for us human intruders, a refuge for indigenous wild life. But I write of the Sanctuary proper, which is all that the name implies.

The Sanctuary includes some eight acres of reedy water, zoned marsh, tussocky grass, ~~t~~ree clumps and bushes, a meadow on higher ground patched with wild flowers, and finally at the high back our forest, the Lickey. It is a hospice for nesting waterfowl and landbirds, a haven for muskrats, an ambrosia for bees. And the flanks of the cove, left purposely in their original ooze, produces in their season dragonflies to be proud of.

It has come to be a very special place to me, this Sanctuary. To me, a lone human. But not alone.

To walk through the Sanctuary or paddle along its shoreline, I like early mornings best for then, thanks to the habits of my fellows, I can be alone. And of these pursuits I like best, perhaps, to paddle round the Point.

So at such an early hour I take the canoe Yo-Ho-Ho and paddle through the south entrance of the cove. It is a silvery morning. Away to the west a wan moon rides the mists that roll up from the dark verge of land. Overhead the last pole stars hang high. And, around me, my own mists are rising. There is the faintest gurgling ripple from the paddle. I nose through the reeds and grate on shore. The birds are silent. The lily flowers are still folded in slumber. Only a moth is moving, slowly as though still heavily burdened with sleep. Two bats hurry for their secret shelter, black raggy tatters whirling up against the brightening sky. And here, in the spell of the morning, I await the dawn.

Now a whisper of wind. It comes from the dawn quarter and, stirring unsheltered offshore water, shatters the glass that held the rosy streaks of the sky. I push back into the reeds, and round the Point into the rising sun.

I swing out into the lake and head for the cove, dipping a thoughtful paddle. Thinking of how at Driftwillow I had sought a simple quiet life. And wondering whether I have found God.

But I must not belittle the early-morning walk. And on another morning, as I walk, I wonder if, really, I like paddling better.

The trouble with walking is the dew-drenched grass and leaves, for there are not too many well-beaten paths at Driftwillow. So, perforce, I don high rubber boots.

The first thing I see this morning is that Mr. Skunk has supped on our garbage. These creatures of the night, do they sneak out stealthily, conscious of trespass? Or do they, while I sleep, usurp the deed to my domain, and wander in it with more privacy and freedom than I may claim in daytime?

So I walk into the Sanctuary thinking about human ownership, my own possessiveness. In the beginning I had passionately wanted to own Driftwillow. To have legal claim to the land, the trees, the beach. To hold dominion over all its creatures. But by degrees I was coming to know my position better, to feel that, in the natural context, "own" is a hateful little word.

Now, I watch a woodpecker at early breakfast. My woodpecker? No, not mine, not as hen would be on my farm (if I had one). Mr. Woodpecker is quite a free and independent creature. But, does he peck on my tree? Ah, here is a question! As I watch him I am inclined to say that it is his tree. Yet I use it, too. So friend, Woodpecker, shall we say that it is our tree!

Thus thoughts of deeds and legal claims dissipate with the morning mists. I look beyond my boundary and find equal pleasure, find

nature naturally undivided. Nature is God's country and, as He shares it with me, so will I share it with all his creatures — even the one called man.

And so in rubber boots through tussochy grass, I think of God and religion. Of how, long ago, at the exhortations of a grim fire-and brimstone revivalist, I would not come foreward to be saved. And I think of how, at Assisi, I could have knelt with St. Francis, a kindred spirit in his meadow of buttercups.

I came back from the Sanctuary that morning with blue-stained fingers, telltaling of saskatoon time.

\* \* \*

#### D - DAY AT DRIFTWILLOW

I had hoped to see them come ashore on the sixth of June, the twentieth anniversary of another great amphibian invasion. However, that Saturday morning passed with Willow Cove, and the whole length of the Kapasiwin shoreline, serene and unmolested.

But on the seventh they came. Came with the first warmth of the morning sun. Bug-like larvae, creeping in their bulgy-eyed, large-lipped, dirty-gray thousands. Up from the ooze-bottomed flanks of the cove. Out of the water, over the beach, into the grass of Driftwillow's lawn, stiff-legged and sprawling.

The high-cut stubble-like grass was to the liking of the larvae, and by eight o'clock almost every stem near the cove supported a larva, some two or three. Each larva clasped its support looking up into the sky,



as if in anticipation. So they clung in the throes of transformation.

Overhead expectant gulls and lesser gormands wheeled and darted.

          Patiently, motionless, larvae<sup>wet</sup> drying in the warming sunshine; impatiently, restless, avian predators waited as though their meal were slow-cooking.

          See this larva. There is internal swelling, and a split breaks along the upper back and extends up between the eyes. The back of the thorax hunches and the split widens, wedgelike. But the head comes out first, moist and bulgy-eyed, the mouth-parts hanging limp. Then, in a convulsion, the legs, all six, are withdrawn. The whole body arches, straining backward. The abdomen seems stuck in its larval case.

          Time passes. Fifteen minutes. The larva is very quiet. We think of still-birth. There is the first swoop of gulls, and for some of our subjects further transformation will be by bird digestion. But thousands remain.

          Elaine and Elise rush out, bare-footed, toward the beach. They feel the soft wet transformers between their toes and rush back screaming. And I am again alone with the gulls and my midwifery.

          Now the arching thorax seems convulsed in agony. Waving feet fasten upon the stubble. There is straining and tugging. And at last the abdomen, wet and glistening, is free. The wing packs, on either side of the thorax, begin to unfold.

          Thirty minutes more and the wings have expanded, the abdomen lengthened, the eyes brightened. The transformed adult looks very large; the cast skin, absurdly small, still clasps the stubble.

A few minutes more for the wings to dry, and the blue-darner dragonfly is a fresh new creature of the air and sky.

So this was D-Day, Dragonfly - Day, at Driftwillow. It was the culmination of two years of larval life.

In the spring two years before the eggs (laid the previous summer, probably in punctured reed stems) hatched into small larvae. Each larva grew to become too large for its skin. So the skin was cast off. Such growth and molting was repeated several times before the winter came.

The larva grows, of course, by eating. It sits quietly, usually on the bottom of shallow water, waiting for the prey to come within reach of its darting lip. The lip at rest is drawn back to form a mask in front of the head; but it will shoot forward, lightning-fast, half the length of the body to grasp the hapless victim.

There is a second summer of growth and compensating molting, and a second overwintering. Then the next spring the larva matures, and is ready to emerge some fine early summer day — D - Day.

By noon on D - Day, hungry dragonflies in their hundreds were hawking up and down the shore. Is it just imagination, my hearing a brittle twang from the beat of their shining wings? In my binoculars I catch fleeting glimpses of their darting flight, of their legs held forward, basket-like, to clutch the fleeing prey.

In the evening there is an all-out attack on mosquitos. Then as the gathering dusk deepens, the dragonflies seek shelter in the tall grasses of the Sanctuary. And clinging low on the stems they, who were last night at the bottom of the lake, go to sleep in the open air.

A few days more and there will be mating. Mating in flight, as it should be for winged creatures of the air. Later, egg-laying. And still later the first frosts.

And when I come out to Driftwillow in November, to shutter its windows, I will see my dragonflies clinging to their stems in the Sanctuary. Clinging in death, their wings glinting in the thin wintry sunshine.

\* \* \*

#### TRIBUTE TO TRIXIE

A gentle little creature. A spayed Skye Terrier with one ear up and one ear down. The dog of our family who devotedly loved her humans. Mistress of the backyard in the city. Empress of Driftwillow, our peninsula in Lake Wabamun.

We got her at two-and-one-half months, and a real baby she was. Not that she wished to be cuddled, but she liked to be put to bed (on my study couch) and covered over (with one of my shirts and a heavy sweater tight against her back) with only her nose showing. I would caress her nose and say, "good-night, Trixie" and she would sigh her contentment. Then I would switch off the light and close the door.

She always greeted me on my return to the house. If she were in the back yard she would bark for me to come out, or for me to let her in.

Among the many words she knew, Driftwillow thrilled her most. And when we turned off the main highway toward the cottage (three miles away) she became very excited. And when we got there she was so much a part of it -- that it doesn't seem like Driftwillow any more.

On the 20th of June we arrived at 3:45. And Trixie ran her usual joyous circle round the lawn. The car unloaded, I decided to do some concrete work on Windrift Island. And the girls said they were going for a walk. Just after 4:30 the girls came home crying. A car had given them a lift back from the highway. Trixie had been hit by a boat trailer drawn by another car. The man of this car had stayed with her.

We started up the road and met the man with the trailer. He said that he thought the dog was dead and had left "him" on the side of the road. We walked on, round Kapasiwin store onto highway 30 (Oh, why had they taken her onto the highway without a leash!) Across the railway tracks and up the hill and a third way down. There lay Trixie on the West side of the road.

I picked her up. She was nice and warm, but bleeding from the mouth. I carried her along the tracks and on the way I felt her heart, hoping for its beat. But Trixie was dead. I took her to the cottage and covered her with the Bedouin blanket.

About three hours later we put her in a box. One soft towel under her and another over her. Only her nose showed and I caressed it as I had always done, and said Goodbye.

We wrapped the box in heavy black plastic and I dug the grave among the fireweeds under the willows. There she lays under a large white-painted flagstone with a marker. It says:

TRIXIE

Died June 20, 1964

Age 3 1/2 years

It's a pretty grave with two bouquets of flowers before it. And when I got up next morning at dawn, and went out on the deck, I saw the white stone shining in the first rays of the mid-summer sun.

When Elaine could talk about it she said that she petted her just after the accident. And poor little Trixie had wagged her tail, and died.

\* \* \*

The time came to sell Driftwillow. Bob had moved to Vancouver, the girls wanted to spend their summers with friends who looked to the city for their fun, Del and I had the city house, too; and Driftwillow became superfluous. One other reason, and my main one, was the vandals. For over two years Driftwillow remained inviolate, its sanctity unmolested. They ~~they~~ came with their senseless destruction. I am a man without hate or hostilities; but the vandal arouses me as no other and I am sure that, given the chance, I would have defended Driftwillow against him with reckless ferocity.

Disposing of Driftwillow had its problems, apart from the heartbreak. We had seven boats. Bob took the big motor boat to the coast. I sold the Driftwillow Queen, a large pontoon craft that could carry 20 passengers, and the sailboat. I gave away the girls' boat and the rowboat. And I left the kyak and Yo-Ho-Ho, the canoe, with Mr. Sheppy, the new owner. I could spin a yarn about this canoe, but I won't. It was an English canoe, Peterboro-made, and scuttled one fathom deep off my shore by boot-leggers during prohibition. I salvaged it and spent a year in its restoration, to make it my favorite.

I shall dwell no longer on Driftwillow. It remains a dream -- even more-cherished, now that it is gone.

## CHAPTER 18. THE FAR EAST

The early sixties were productive years, in terms of material published. There were Thetans and Biometrics in book form and a score or more of short stories and articles. I was asked to join the Canadian Authors Association, and in 1965 became President of its Edmonton Branch.

Driftwillow drew us away from the Glendale Golf and Country Club and, with annual fees assessed and faithfully paid, Del and I golfed over the years with extreme rarity at rates as high as \$4.00 per hole!

Early in 1965 I embarked on a new writing venture — a biography, long overdue, of the late Premier of Alberta, William Aberhart. I was encouraged in this by Premier Ernest C. Manning, who suggested collaboration with Mrs. Ola J. MacNutt, née Aberhart. I became fully committed to write the biography, and was spending my spare time interviewing appropriate people and scanning old newspapers projected from microfilm, when I got a telephone call from New York. June 17, I remember it well.

Ford Foundation calling. Erf, the name. Would you consider an assignment to Pakistan? Rice breeding. This telegraphic style misrepresents the call. It was a most leisurely one, lasting at least a half hour.

It was an important decision for my family and me to make, and would require time. But I knew the final answer from the start. Of course we would accept!

A hectic four months followed, and every action positive. Apply to the University for leave, hurry-up the data-gathering for the biography, arrange for Bob and Shirley to take over the house and Buster,

successor to Trixie. They planned the wedding for December — well, make it October! A trip to New York in August — every thing settled. We are going.

Del, Elaine, Elise and I in a dither. Our hands to the wheel, our arms to the needle (14 shots each). Bob and Shirley in an ecstatic trance. Wedding on October 23 (beautiful), honeymoon at the Coast, back on the 29th — the same day as the passports arrived from Ottawa. So we took-off on the 30th.

We had planned to go by way of the Atlantic, but the Indo-Pakistani war changed that. So we were to cross the Pacific and I was to study at the International Rice Research Institute, in The Philippines, until the war situation eased.

On Saturday the 30th we got to bed, at the Edmonton Auto Court, at 1:00 a.m. — after dancing at the Penthouse with Bob and Shirley (and pledging a repeat performance upon our return). Up four hours later. Supervised the locking, roping and labelling of our 13 pieces of baggage (two were mine). Art and Beth Paul and Bob, Shirley (and Buster) arrived at 6:15. Weighing in at the Airport, I found that our impedimenta (bags) totalled 262 pounds, two under the limit. Dr. Person and Dr. and Mrs. Aksel also arrived to see us off at 7:30.

\* \* \*

Calgary, Vancouver, Seattle, then North West Flight 7 over a moonlit ocean to Tokyo, where we arrived on Sunday (4:40 a.m. Edmonton time, 8:40 p.m. local time). Then to beds, long over-due, in Hotel Okura at eleven.

We found all Departmental stores closed on Monday, but we went to the Ginza anyway. Then by subway to the Imperial <sup>a</sup>Place grounds, where we picniced on two barbecued chickens. Next day we took a most enjoyable all day tour, and shopped in the hotel.

To the airport on Wednesday (with a four pound wooden elephant in my pocket). Impedimenta now at 264, the limit. Off for Hong Kong at noon by Lufthansa Flight 647 — perhaps our most luxurious flight: champagne, roses, dollar cigars, etc. etc. (Ford Foundation takes you first class).

Hong Kong (with Kowloon an integral part) is a most fascinating city, and drives bargain-minded shoppers mad. I madly bought a tropical-weight jacket, made-to-measure and instantly tailored. Del went oriental and the girls to weighty souvenirs (ivory, brass and cast iron), well worth five times their cost — as excess baggage.

We were staying in a corner suite at the Peninsula Hotel, Kowloon. I imagined that the Prince of Wales used to stay there. F.F. had reserved it for us and were presumably picking up the bill. We all enjoyed it immensely, including the view. I am glad I didn't know then that it was "on personal" — at U.S. \$73 per day!

The second day we had breakfast, in great style, in the suite and then took a five-hour tour of Kowloon and the New Territories. Fascinating. And a view of China from a British outpost.

Late in the afternoon I was in our luxury suite preparing for the flight to Manila. I put on one suit coat, then another, then my top coat. Then I took off all three and pinned them together (with large diaper pins, specially purchased) at the sleeves and colars. Now, I



filled all the pockets (12) with books and other flatware such as Elise's cast-iron wall plaque. I left carrying my 40-pound top coat jauntily on my arm.

On Philippine Air Line Flight 303, the stewardess politely offered to relieve me of my coat. I heard it drop with a thud, and then watched her drag my coat along the aisle to the cloak room!

At Manila airport we were met by two Ford Foundation men and whisked off in a Fairlane to Manila Hotel.

Next morning we reported to the F.F. Representative, Dr. Henry Case, and saw something of the city. After lunch Dr. Bob Chandler, Director of the International Rice Research Institute (I.R.R.I.), arrived in a Fairlane wagon and took us and our baggage to the Staff Housing Estate in Los Baños, forty-odd miles south and east. There was a beautiful house in beautiful grounds, with an L.P. JOHNSON sign on the lawn and our own Falcon in the breezeway.

\* \* \*

The Ford and Rockefeller Foundations are always trying to find good ways to spend a few million, especially Ford which is much the richer of the two. They have top-notch people from home office to field stations and their achievements, per dollar, are probably unmatched.

In 1958 these Foundations set out to discover why average rice yields were 5,300 pounds per acre in Japan and only 900 - 1,200 in Monsoon Asia (India, East Pakistan, Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, etc.). The answer lay mainly in the structural differences of the rice species involved. Oryza japonica varieties have relatively short, stiff stems and

stiff upright leaves; O. indica rices are tall, weak-stemmed, with long drooping leaves. The japonica types respond to high levels of fertilizer, the weak-stemmed indicas fall down after only moderate applications of fertilizer. The stiff upright leaves of japonica get sunlight on both sides, even on the lower leaves; the drooping leaves of indica are exposed only on the upper sides and they intercept light to lower leaves. Here differences in plant architecture were translatable into differences in yield potentials. The object was obviously to breed a japonica type adapted to the monsoon region.

So the International Rice Research Institute was conceived. Selecting Los Baños (14° N. Latitude) as the site, Ford built its cluster of fine structures and its attractive housing estate. Rockefeller staffed it and undertook to run it, administering a very large Ford grant (under which I operated). I.R.R.I., with its twelve scientific Departments, in addition to that of Varietal Improvement, is unquestionably the foremost rice research center in the world.

Before it was officially opened in 1962, I.R.R.I. had its program under way. A world-wide collection of rices, running into many thousands, had been started, and some hundreds of **crosses** were made. By 1965, there were many hybrids ready for on-the-spot testing in each of the Monsoon countries of South-East Asia. I was selected to do this job for Pakistan.

Well, I saw my first rice plant, close-up, on November 6. Doctors Hank Beachell and T.T. Chang helped me to get started. I worked hard and learned fast, and was much-inclined to talk rice at the social events in the evenings.

We were all fascinated by the tropics, lush vegetation everywhere. Del had a splendid maid, Norma Bagui, who did much of the cooking and helped buy groceries in the markets. The girls went swimming in the Estate pool every day and spent most evenings at Mc Clungs (Colin was Assistant Director) looking at T.V. Del had time for a couple of trips to Manila with Mrs. Mc Clung, who taught school there.

Word came that the Ford people, evacuated from Dacca because of the war, would be returning at the end of the month. We were ready, too, for I was now an acknowledged rice expert!

We left early on November 28. When we boarded Philippines Air Lines Flight 300 at Manila, we walked on a long red carpet between lines of an honor guard to the first class steps. We were hardly in our seats when in came President-elect Marcus, with his wife and official party. Marcus had been elected on the 9th and was taking a Hong Kong holiday.

Our impedimenta were aboard, now increased to 14 pieces for I was carrying a box of 303 samples of I.R.R.I. rices with me — and Ford would pay the excess!

A full five hours in Kowloon and then off to Bangkok on BOAC Flight 925, arriving at dusk and putting up at the Erawan Hotel. The Erawan has a central courtyard with a palm-fringed swimming pool that, somehow, radiates the orient.

Next morning was devoted to business with Dwight Finfrock (Rockefeller), and the afternoon to a Boon Vanit tour of Bangkok. We spent the evening watching movies over the pool.

On November 30th we were off at 2:30 and, having crossed over the forests and mountains and rivers of Burma, arrived at Dacca just before

four. Passports were scrutinized by an official before anyone could leave the aircraft. And everybody left but the Johnsons. It took about ten minutes to clear up the trouble — our Canadian passports looked like poor counterfeits of British ones!

In the airport, its windows still sandbagged after the recent war, we were met by Haldore Hanson, Ford Representative for Pakistan and Mr. Osmani, officer in charge of the Foundation's local General Service Office. We drove in two right-hand-drive Zephyrs to our new home, 16 A Dhanmandi, Road No. 6.

Our air-shipment, sent on unopened from Los Baños, was waiting for us.

\* \* \*

Our new house was large and, by any standard, ill-planned. It was set in a large, walled compound with a well-planned garden. The most remarkable feature of the establishment was our six servants, and I think that they deserve to be listed in some detail:

Cook, Daniel, Christian, 5 dependents, monthly wage	Rs. 170
Bearer, Paul, Christian, 7 dependents, " "	Rs. 140
Hamil, Sudhin, Christian, unmarried, " "	Rs. 110
Mali, Hiralal, Hindu, 4 dependents, " "	Rs. 100
Chowkhidar, Mohammadulla, Muslim, several, monthly wage	Rs. 100
Driver, Manouruddin Ahmed, Muslim, 3 dependents, monthly wage	Rs. 190

A Pakistani rupee (R., plural Rs.) is worth 21 cents (U.S.). A bearer serves tea, waits at the table, etc. A hamil is a sweeper and general houseboy. A mali is a gardener. A chowkhidar is a night watchman.

The girls started immediately to the Dacca American Society School (a splendid institution), I went to work, and Del stayed home hopelessly swamped with servants.

I was given an office in the Agricultural Research Institute, next door to that of my chief counterpart, Dr. A. Alim, Economic Botanist (Cereals). Three pathetic men, barefoot peons in tattered shirts and lungyis, sat on a bench outside my door waiting to run my errands. If I went to the door to look at the park across the way, I would see <sup>them</sup> starting to their feet. Alim was a splendid chap, as was my number two counterpart, Hasan Zaman. They were both well-qualified in plant breeding, but hopelessly enmeshed in the redtape of a deadening bureaucracy. The Institute was still recognizably British in spite of its dereliction.

Just a year before the Ruttam-Beachell-Hanson Report to I.R.R.I. and its two Foundations had concluded that "an effective working arrangement would be . . . difficult . . . because of the almost complete absence of an effective research organization in East Pakistan".

Obviously, there was some hard work ahead.

My first job was to find a suitable experimental field for testing my I.R.R.I. rices. Dacca Farm, an experimental area of about 300 acres, had been taken by the Government of East Pakistan as the site of their Second Capital. (This arose out of the siting of the National Capital in West Pakistan, at Islamabad near Rawalpindi). So, for three-and-a-half years, the Institute had been without an experimental field. The staff of 88 under Alim and some 300 others under Chemistry, Soils, Entomology,

Mycology, etc., were quite happy to draw their salaries for inside paper work. The higher administration was quite happy too — the Institute hardly needed an Operational Budget at all!

*Before* the week was out a fifty-acre area at the Savar Farm was selected with full co-operation from the Director, Mr. K.R. Khan, and with tentative approval from Mr. Ali, Ministry official concerned. Savar was a Government dairy farm of some 2,000 acres 16 miles from Dacca. It had experimental herds of Red Sindi cattle and water buffalo, with males and females in about equal proportions. Eleven tube wells had been bored, but only three were functioning, and projected irrigation had never "got out of the pumps".

With Alim, Zaman and U. Hpu (a remarkable Burmese exile), I selected a building site and a seedbed area. The latter, for growing seedlings for transplanting, had to be irrigated from Well No. 8 and 1000 feet of 4-inch pipe were needed. My cheque book on my rupee account solved this problem. Next we had to select our paddy fields. I chose a large beel midway between inactive Wells Nos. 4 and 5 (surely I could get one or the other going). A beel is the natural flood channel in a jungle in which trees cannot persist.

Of course, all this took time. Interruptions and procrastination, the idea that paper work was an end in itself, had me tearing my hair. I wrote in my diary "They just can't appreciate my impatience with their delays. If I were not in such a hurry, the interruptions would be, as for them, mere interludes of pleasurable relaxation".

I had 500 pounds of IR9-60 and 100 of IR-8-288-3 rices air-shipped from I.R.R.I. I then eased my mind by paying Aktar Hameed Khan, Director of the Academy for Rural Development, Comilla, U.S. \$2,000 (he

didn't want rupees) for putting in duplicate tests, as insurance against a possible failure at Savar. In mid-March we sowed the high-land Aus (summer rice) crop, to grow with the "Small Rains" now about to begin.

At the same time I sowed the seedbeds at Savar.

"But we don't have an irrigated paddy field for transplanting," objected Alim.

"But," I said, "we'll have lots of motivation for getting one."

To quote from my diary: "I sowed No. 1 in its seedbed, then the others took over — all 34 of them! Visited Well House No. 4 — still no motor, no starter. Went to Director's office. Mr. Ali in Khan's chair. Big stir about our high land. Ali called Khan a fool for letting us have it . . . Back at the seedbeds, I brought out two jars of sweets that I had bought at Savar Market. Picnic under the mangos. Atahar, Plot Foreman, happy. First real field work in four years!"

Now I bore down hard on getting one of the wells activated. No. 4 was closest to electric power and I concentrated on it. Unfortunately, President Ayub Khan was in Dacca at the time and all government officials of any account were at the Presidential Palace — in the very remote event that they might be asked for information. This would last for two weeks. Fortunately, I found an engineer, Mr. A. Hakim, on the job in the Communications and Buildings Department. And he was a real find. Well No. 4 was pumping on April 4th.

We did the ploughing and puddling of our paddy fields, the rice was transplanted on time, and I think Alim was happiest of all. He was a real rice man at heart.

After reading my report, Hal Hanson wrote from Karachi:

"I cannot express to you how surprised and delighted I am at the extent of your contacts, the depth of your information, and the amount of territory you have covered in so few weeks. In all the time I have been connected with technical assistance, I do not recall any adviser taking off with such speed as you have".

\* \* \*

On December 24th we moved to a new house at 103B, Road No. 6, taking all our servants with us. It was a big improvement, and the walled compound was bigger, 180 x 180 feet. The girls were busy immediately, decorating for Christmas. Had hoped to have our sea shipment (but we didn't get it until January 14th). There were money gifts to the servants. And our own presents piled around a jar of large poinsettia branches, taken from the garden.

On Christmas morning we had cake and coffee at a friend's house. Mali made marigold wreaths for each of us. We had chicken for dinner, a bird that must have had an exceptionally rough, tough life.

I was very busy and time flew, Del had nothing to do and time dragged. I did considerable flying, by plane and helicopter. The latter made me nervous, the vibration was terrific — and I was always picking screws and bolts off the floor!

Early in the morning on Sunday, January 23rd, Ahmed came to tell us that it was Eid-ul-Fitr. Someone had seen the Shawal (new) moon and it was announced on the radio at five o'clock. So we went by car to the



Mosque (Ahmed to pray) and I to the Outer Stadium, where I took pictures and gave alms.

Which reminds me to say something of Dacca's beggars. I should have thought that a year in Damascus would have prepared me for them. But I hadn't seen anything. Beggars with one stub arm, no arms, one leg, no legs; men moaning piteously, men creeping in the dust, blind men led by children; children alone <sup>m</sup>maimed or otherwise expert; women in all stages of decrepitude, ~~h~~ags; fleshless faces of unknown sex — only the leprosy certain. I saw many thousands on that Eid-ul-Fitr day, and stepped over hundreds prostrate on the sidewalks.

Our sleep was often disturbed by the pye dogs. Roaming packs, male and female, all colors, all stages of mange and emaciation; yelping, whining, fighting, scavenging by night; sleeping, or slinking singly, by day.

And the street traffic! Unquestionably the most remarkable thing in Dacca. The British system of driving on the left is observed only by the relatively unmaneuverable traffic components such as man-drawn wagons, horse drawn wagons, herds of cows or goats and heavy lorries and busses. The rest, cycle rickshaws (pedicabs), auto rickshaws (three-wheeled taxis), cars, bicycles, motorcycles, scooters, pedestrians (people, people, people) will dash for any momentary opening, right or left. If you have a horn, you blow it; otherwise, you shout. The auto rickshaw is the greatest hazzard, for it can turn suddenly at right angles from a parked position, into your path. And all this complicated by the numerous broken patches in the pavement, which are unexpectedly seen and suddenly avoided.

Many of the streets have no curbed sidewalks, and I was warned not to gamble with my life on the footpaths. But being a walker I often ventured on them just before bedtime, always to the detriment of my footwear for the cows had been there before me.

And street music. The man with the violin is a bit whiney and completely monotonous — either we have a single performer who knows only one tune, or else there are many violinists with only a single piece arranged for this instrument in the whole of Bengal. The meandering air of the flute was more varied and quite pleasing. A boy singing in the street was the pleasantest sound of all.

I will note two events of early January, both on the 3rd. Arriving at work I found the place in uproar. Dacoits had broken into the Institute during the night. The safe have withstood a battering. Several things were missing, including all the door keys. And arriving home I found that Dr. Eunus, my former post-doctorate fellow, had brought the monkey, long-promised, to the girls. We gave it the neuter name of Coco. And it took some time before we could call it her.

\* \* \*

Hal Hanson arrived on the 26th, just as Eid celebrations came to an end, accompanied by his wife, Bernie, and Tom Robinson, a former Vice-president at New York University. Next day we were off to the Ganges-Kobadek irrigation project.

We flew west to Ishurdi in a DC-3. The co-pilot wanted to talk to one of the passengers in the rear, and I took his place for a half hour being careful not to exercise his function. From Ishurdi we drove to the

lower Ganges just south of the Hardinge Bridge. No trains running to Calcutta, but lots of soldiers guarding the Bridge. Our chartered motorboat soon turned up and we made the ~~f~~four-mile crossing to Kushtia. Mr. Anderson, Danish FAO expert, entertained us at his house and then drove us in a Japanese Land Cruiser along the canals to Amla Farm. There I met Asadullah and Mima, who had samples of my 303 I.R.R.I. rices. We discussed planting procedures.

Then back to Kushtia, a moonlight crossing of the Ganges, and on by car to Rajshahi. Tom and I had a room in the WAPDA (Water and Power Development Authority) Guest House. Hard bed, mosquito net smelling of Flit, Tom snoring. So I got up and wrote a poem, which gave the thoughts that came to me as we cross<sup>ed</sup> the Ganges three hours before, and which is appended to this chapter.

We spent next day at Rajshahi University, with Vice-Chancellor Shamsul Huk, and at the Silk Institute which Ford Foundation is helping to develop. And the day after, at Natore and Ishurdi, before flying back to Dacca.

I did a lot of travelling in early February, including two days at Mymensingh University, getting to know the country and its men of science.

Then on the 12th all of the new Ford families of Dacca (nine in number) flew to Karachi for an Orientation Course. We four Johnsons put up at Hanson's house. For a week, we attended lectures on Pakistan, Islam, the Third Five-Year Plan, Problems of Technical Assistance, etc. We visited ~~m~~mosques, laboratories, and industries, swam in the Arabian Sea and saw the Pathans dance by torchlight.

On the morning of Sunday the 20th we Johnsons left for the Airport at 7:30 to meet Captain Haider Baluch who was to fly us to Mohenjodaro archaeological site in a Cessna 185. I was to visit the Dokri Rice Research Station, which is near these great ruins of an ancient Indus Valley civilization. The plan<sup>e</sup> had been damaged. Will soon be repaired. At eleven we boarded the craft and went taxiing around with the Captain. Not enough R.P.M. The Captain slapped his forehead in disgust at 11:20, and we returned to Hanson's in the same frame of mind.

Next day the Nine Ford Families flew to Lahore. I had rice work at the Kala Shah Kaku Experiment Station but took time to go with the family to the Fort and the Mosque. We were ejected from the latter by students who thought we were Americans. (Eleven students had been killed a few days earlier, just after Vice-president Humphries visit, in riotous attempts to burn down the U.S. Information Service building). The others saw Shalmar Gardens, but I had to delay that pleasure until a later visit.

On the 22nd we were off by road to Rawalpindi. Arriving *just* after noon, we checked in at the Ford Flat and then went to O'Brien's for lunch. Del sat in the heat of the fireplace, shivering. She had malaria. Under the care of Mrs. O'Brien and Dr. Sheikh, Del stayed behind and we carried on.

After lunch we went to see the new National Capital at Islamabad. We had planned to go to Murray, up near the Kashmiri border, but an overnight snow storm had blocked the road.

Next day was a big one. Taking leave of Del, seemingly comfortable at O'Brien's, <sup>we</sup> were off early for Taxila. Visited the Museum and the Sirkap site — lots of shards. Then on to the Indus, Attock Fort, Pathan country and Peshawar. Stayed at Dean's Hotel, visited the bazaar, and had

dinner at the U.S. Airforce Base — imported American food, including turkey and Pabst beer. Telephone call from Mrs. O'Brien. Del not to return with us to Dacca on Friday (25th) but will come with the Wooldruges on Sunday.

An even bigger day on Thursday. Through the Khyber Pass, to stand on Afghani<sup>h</sup> soil, back (by way of Landi Kotal, the smuggler's town) to Peshawar for visits to the Academy for Rural Development and the Agricultural Research Institute, at Tarnab. Then by air to Rawalpindi ('phoned O'Briens — Del recovering nicely) and, finally, Lahore.

More rice and Ministry business in Lahore Friday morning, then an afternoon flight to Dacca. Lots of mail, temperature 90°, and everything intact at 103-B.

\* \* \*

Back to routine days in Dacca. Del came home on the 27th still a bit shakey; but happy to get the Kashmiri shawl and other things we had bought for her in Peshawar.

But she had wanted to see the Khyber Pass! Perhaps we shall go back one day to The Northwest Frontier and the Pathans that gave the British so much trouble. These tribes live on either side of the Afghanistan border, some still nomadic, all speaking the Pashtu language. Theirs is a rough, feuding culture in which a good rifle is a vital necessity. Walt Freeman, Ford Foundation, Peshawar, estimated the Pathan population at 5,000,000. He listed three main means of livelihood for a Pathan family: farming or stock grazing, smuggling, or sale of young boys (to ubiquitous homo-sexuals). "The average man prefers a woman; but, in the absence of

the opposite sex, he is happy enough with a boy".

My activities in promoting my "Accelerated Rice Research Project" during March and early April was described before the West Pakistan trip. I now pick up the narrative again with Well No. 4 triumphantly pumping water for our paddy fields.

Everything progressed wonderfully. We transplanted the 303 I.R.R.I. varieties on 18 - 20 April. I was very pleased with the operation. After all, our field staff were rather out of practice. We also put in a fertilizer test using IR9-60, IR-8-288-3 and appropriate standards treated with several superimposed levels of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. We used 1/100 acre plots replicated 4 times, comprising in all over three acres. Both of these experiments were repeated at Abhoy Ashram, Comilla, and District Farm, Comilla. The 303 - variety test was also put in at Amla Farm (west of Kushtia), Rajshahi University and Kala Shah Kaku, Lahore. Being in large supply, IR9-60 was widely distributed.

Late in April I was back in Lahore, delivering seeds for Kala Shah Kaku, Dokri and Tarnab, and examining prospective I.R.R.I. trainees from these same stations. I returned with a gift basket of citrus fruit and basmati rice.

On 30 April, I was off for Manila and I.R.R.I. My outward trip I have described in the appended vignette, Jungle Flight.

At I.R.R.I. plans were laid for expanding varietal and fertilizer testing and for inclusion of adequate experimentation on the control of insect pests and plant diseases. I was joined by West Pakistanis Shafi (of Kala Shah Kaku) and Abbasi (of Dokri), both excellent men with rather more

energy and initiative than one would expect from East Pakistanis.

I flew out of Manila with 60 cigars and Fanny Hill (to read). Having eight hours of Hong Kong and many requests from Daccans for watches, cameras, radios, bed sheets, beaded sweaters, etc. etc., and only 44 pounds baggage allowance, I got out the diaper pins and came away with an exceedingly heavy top coat. An overnight stop at the Oriental Hotel in Bangkok<sup>3</sup> and then to Dacca and a feverish but successful passage through customs.

Just after returning I had the first of many visits from Ghulam Mohammed, engineer and economist of Karachi, who explained his visit by saying that he had heard of me. A few more men like Ghulam in the West and Akhter Hameed Khan in the East, and Pakistan would have little need of aid from outside.

During the period<sup>of</sup> watching our rice plots grow with phenomenal promise, and of waiting for the monsoon, I was very busy.

The Savar site was being improved: a gateway made in the fence and a sign erected, water piped-in, kutchas of bamboo and palm supplemented or replaced by pukka buildings of brick and mortar, a proper latrine, six bullocks for draft power — all these from my playing Aladdin by scratching my magic chequebook with my pen!

Then there were the trainees, junior professional staff to train at I.R.R.I. for six months. This was harder work: medical checkups by Dr. Bassett (the Briton who was unquestionably the most indispensable person in Dacca), family permissions, assurances by the government of job security, and finally the great mass of relatives at the airport, impeding departure.

At home, Coco was keeping us all on our toes (Del on her knees, praying for succor).

Books, for private pleasure and professional profit, were available at the British Council. The girls discovered the Dacca Club — swimming and tennis. I got out the data on Aberhart; poised for the time when, rained-in, I might have time for Chapter 1.

The selection of a 650 - acre site at Joydepur, and its official acceptance by Additional Chief Secretary Quamer ul Islam as a permanent area for experimental development, was the culmination of much study and persuasiveness on my part.

Our seedbeds were sown again at Savar, for Aman tests coming up.

We made an enjoyable family trip to Comilla by car and the three ferries, and home next day on the big ferry from Dandkandi to Narayanganj.

And, on that very day, June 17, the Rains came.

\* \* \*

The monsoon came on in the evening: a torrential rain driven by gale winds, our street littered with fallen branches, our house dark from an electric power failure.

July was a big month for the Accelerated Rice Research Project. Transplanting for the Aman plots and paddies. Aman tests going in at 75 locations, totalling 80 acres. And the Aus crop being harvested.

The Aus crop! Results spectacular at all locations. Of the 303 I.R.R.I. varieties, 170 yielded above 4,000 pounds per acre compared to 3,360 for the best standard variety. And IR-8-288-3 produced 8,128



pounds, almost double the previous all-time record!

There was jubilation at I.R.R.I. Our results came in. So did those from the other countries of Monsoon Asia — and IR-8-288-3 always on top!

Our project now went into high-gear. In October we started an intensive training program of 400 extension workers (Thana Agricultural Officers, TAO), 60 at a time in a succession of three-week courses. Bill Golden, I.R.R.I. extension specialist came, with two Philippino experts, to help us.

Publicity got quickly out of control, and IR8 became the "Miracle Rice. We tried to discourage the use of this term as being unscientific and possibly misleading, but to no avail.

Our preparations for wide-scale commercial production of IR8 (and other I.R.R.I. rices) inspired a new action-program by the Government of Pakistan. Ministers of Agriculture, East and West, visited our fields and the TAOs in training. They were followed by East Pakistan Governor, Monem Khan. When the Food and Agriculture Minister of the Central Government, Mr. Doha, opened one of our TAO courses, the Governor presented him with an official green-covered booklet for transmittal to the President. Over half of this 36-page booklet was devoted to the performance, and promise, of IR8 and other I.R.R.I. rices. And, when President Ayub Khan next visited East Pakistan, he made a special 20-mile trip to visit our 100-acre multiplication block of IR8 and IR9.

In December the President proclaimed that national priorities in economic support would be switched from the industrial sector (which had had almost exclusive support for 19 years) to the agricultural sector.

Simultaneously Governor Monem Khan announced the "Grow More Food Campaign" for East Pakistan,

When we harvested our Aman crop, however, IR8 was not the top yielder. That place went to IR5. But in the Boro (winter) season of 1966-67, IR8 came back with a yield of 9,091 pounds per acre!

\* \* \*

We have given rice its well-deserved due, and may look again at matters personal.

Going back to late May, I mention that our roof developed a leak during one of the "small rains", and that the wall of Elaine's bedroom developed a wet patch irrespective of any precipitation. We showed these cases of unwanted moisture to Osmani and he called in the landlady's brother. There followed the most striking incidents of our life in Dacca.

Respecting the roof, I expected someone to go up there with a pot of hot asphalt. But no. They (some 20) went up with 24 tons of broken brick and 170 maunds (13,940 pounds) of lime — so the landlady's brother told me with great pride. Then the women came, with their clubs and their babies. For 10 hours of each of the next 42 days these women, usually in relays of five, pounded rhythmically on our roof, pulverizing the brick, mixing it with lime and water and impacting it into a solid 8-inch layer of impervious roof. The dozen or so babies usually reclined on our roof stair landing (where we left scraps of food) or in the shade of our water tank, lulled, apparently, by the club-beats that all but drove us nutty, down below. But there were periodic outbursts of squalling kids and shouting mothers. One day I found a girl, about eight, lying at the bottom of the stairs badly bruised. I went to her fearing an accident, but the bruises were a day old and she was only sleeping. There were stray people all over the place, more or less black and more or less naked.

The wet patch on Elaine's wall was, of course, from a leaking pipe embedded in concrete. The repairs were remarkable — for the amount of concrete removed, the seemingly extraneous 10-inch incision right around the exterior of the house at roof level, the duration of work stoppages,

and the number of times that the water was turned off. Bamboo ladders and workmen in dhotis (loin cloths) all over the place.

One certainly couldn't complain about make-shift repairs, and we shed the rains when they came.

Coincidental with this hubbub at home was the "hartal" (general strike) and I was advised not to go into the streets on June 7th to 9th. Vehicles were burned, trains derailed, buses stoned, tires deflated, stores and houses looted. On the 8th ten people were killed, and hundreds injured by police. That evening I went up on the roof. The streets were empty, quiet, not even a tooting auto horn; then in the distance I heard the shouting of a roving band of strikers. We heard of cases of "gherao", a form of coercion where workers hold management captive in their offices for days, without food or water, until there is capitulation to their demands. Alim told of a man taking sanctuary in his house, and first-aid for a beating he had received on the street.

Incidentally, we got Mrs. Hewitt's Christmas cake on May 26th, and continued to get Christmas cards far into the summer.

Coco was increasingly the "life" of our household of Johnsons, servants, roof pounders, wall demolishers, and spectators within and without the compound. On May 18th I erected a 15-foot bamboo pole which she climbed, leashed to a sliding ring. I placed the pole in the shade of a carob tree, and Coco, leaping instinctively for the branches which were beyond her reach, would fall to the ground. Before the day was out she had broken her body leash and roved free in the compound.

Within a week she learned to pick seeds off my socks, sit on my head and examine my scalp, open the screen door, steal bananas from a bowl in the living room, and remove the washing from the line.

Her first attempt to escape was on June 8th. She leaped from the wall to a power pole, climbed it, touched a live wire, fell unconscious to the ground, revived, and never left the compound again — except when in or on the car.

Having found my scalp unrewarding, she just sat on my head for the ride. When I moved she held on by putting her warm, moist little hands gently into my eye sockets. She also rode on Elaine's and Elise's heads, but not Del's, who was recognized, along with all others, as the enemy.

To the girls and me she was a baby rather than a pet, and a most intelligent and accomplished baby she was. She could do, and did, everything. We conscientiously repaired all the damage she did, for ~~she~~ she was worth all the trouble she made. Finally, we gave her to Jerry Stivers, Ford Foundation, Karachi, who had a room-sized cage for her in his garden. We put her in the cage she came in and she flew to Karachi on August 25th.

With the monsoon settled upon us I started writing the Aberhart biography, and continued intermittently to completion in March, 1967.

Our only heavy rain was on September 15th and 16th when we had over 13 inches in 24 hours. The city roads were flooded by waters flowing away from the river. Children caught fish in the streets (Mary Jane Young caught one on Road 3, outside DASS School). Our Mali, who lived on low ground, lost his house (along with 100,000 others) and I gave him Rs. 100 for a new one.

Which reminds me to say that we got a new Zephyr on October 12th, beige and very sleek. Ahmed, our faithful driver was rapturous.

Our chowkhidar, Mohammadullah, however, was not so faithful and his raptures were only in his dreams. Mr. Ghazi, who had a very Prussian look, was the roving chief chowkhidar. His job was to make nocturnal rounds, looking in stealthily on each of the score or so of Ford watchman. At 103B, he was continually taking our possessions, a sprinkling can, a hosepipe, or a jar, over to the General Service Office, and leaving a note in my mail box. The note would ask me to retrieve the evidence of Mohammadullah's somnolence and dock him a day's pay. I did the former but not the latter. I didn't believe that any dacoit could be as slinky as Mr. Ghazi.

We had two big parties at our house in December. On the 2nd the girls entertained 85 teenagers<sup>r</sup> of the Anglo-American colony. They liked cokes, darkness (which Del tried continuously to illuminate) and noise. I found only one **escape** from the **latter — the back** bathroom. I filled the tub with pillows and spent four hours in it, reading. On the 18th we entertained some thirty members of our Dacca International Christian Church for Chirstmas Carols. Dave Scheffey played the portable organ.

December 22 was the winter solstice. In Dacca the day length was 10 hours, 39 minutes, in Edmonton, 7 hours, 21 minutes.

For Christmas I got slippers, a tie clip, candies and an apple. The apple was a triumph in procurement, and appropriately delicious.

On Boxing Day we were all up at five and off, with Ahmet at the wheel of the Zephyr, to Cox's Bazar, on the eastern shore of the Bay of Bengal. At seven we were at the ramp of the first ferry, awaiting its first passage. Two more ferries (and the sighting of six porpoises in the estuary) and an hour's run by road brought us to Comilla and Ranir Kuti before ten, for a rest stop. Ranir Kuti, was formerly the palace of the Maharaja's

Maharani, and is now the Ford Foundation's headquarters and residence in Comilla. It is **noted** for the great broad elephant steps at the front (the Maharani mounted at the doorway) and the garden at the back sloping to a great, 15-acre, tank of **limpid** water. Our hosts at this time were the Luykx, Nick and Marvel. Then off to Chittagong, on the Bay, putting up at Parsons Guest House.

That afternoon I visited the Pahartali Agricultural Farm.

Next day we negotiated the curves and bumps of the single lane road southward to Cox's Bazar in three hours. The Bazar did not come up to expectations. No toilets, no dressing rooms, except in an expensive private hotel. A fine broad beach, endless to the view, reminded us of Daytona; but we got stuck in the sand. We collected some shells and bought others and were back at Parsons for dinner.

On the 28th we made an early start for Kaptai Dam, and Lake. We chartered a speedboat and visited three Chakma villages.

The chakma tribe belongs to the Khyoungtha or "Children of the River" group. Before the Lake (256 square miles) was formed they lived in the hills, near the river, subsisting on fish and the products of Jhoom (rotational slash and burn) agriculture. Now they have moved back to higher hills, in some cases encroaching on the Toungha or "Children of the Hills". But their culture is unchanged. Their dress seemed minimal (except for ceremonials). Young boys ran naked, the men in loin cloths, and the womens' garb was often topless.

The Charkmas are still unspoiled. They greeted us with spontaneous pleasure, and with no thought of baksheesh. Everywhere, the young women were weaving, for they must weave many shawls, called Alam,

with intricate, colorful designs, before they are marriageable. Prime specimens of which we, of course, acquired.

It was a wonderful day in which scenic waterways brought us to hill paths that led to the primitive villages of a happy people.

Next day we had again to contend with civilization. But hardly at its peak, for I visited the Government Agricultural Farm at Hathazari, some 15 miles by narrow dirt "road" from Chittagong.

We did the last mile with many halts and much concern about the Zephyr's drive shaft and differential. In wet season, we were told, it was quite impassable by car; but, then, the Farm had no motor vehicles. There was no electricity, no telephone, no residential accommodations (except for the supervisor), no boundary fence — so stray cattle and goats and wild pigs ravaged the outlying experimental crops. There had been no replacement of the original herd of draught bullocks; some had died, most were now 16 years old and too feeble to work. There was a tube well but the pump had not worked in years. The value of the 170 acres was Rs. 11 lakhs (1,100,000), but the annual operating budget was only Rs. 3,000. Mozzenn Hosain, the supervisor, called the Farm "a punishment area".

This was the poorest Government Farm that I had visited; but all had some of the shortages for all suffered from grossly inadequate operating budgets.

I asked Mozzenn Hosain if there were not people about (there is a mixed population around Chittagong) who would hunt wild pigs for food. "Yes," he said, "there are some who will eat pork. They are of the very lowest caste. The ones who collect night soil and clean out latrines".



Later the same day, the 29th, we headed home by way of Ranir Kutí and the three ferries, and found that our good fairies, the servants, had successfully protected 103B from roving bands of dacoits.

The Shawal moon was sighted on the evening of January 11, 1967, and next day was Eid-ul-Fitr, eleven days earlier than last year (because of the Moslem year of 12 lunar months). We received many food gifts from our Moslem friends, especially a hot meal in covered dishes from our driver, Ahmet.

The Chinese Packers came on the 15th to inspect our household and personal effects designated for sea shipment, including many rugs, much brass and copper, several wicker stools (morras, made by the prisoners in Comilla jail), a Kashmiri table and a native plough. A couple of days later they brought three large wooden boxes. One, the size of a small house, was eyed enviously by our poor Mali.

We were going home! I, at least, with mixed feelings.

But first a big swing through the subcontinent "on the way" to Manila.

\* \* \*

The Foundation wanted me to visit India prior to reporting to an annual meeting of their and Rockefeller's rice people at I.R.R.I. And I was willing. Since one couldn't, at the time, fly directly from East Pakistan to India, I had to go via Nepal. Again I was willing.

Early on January 23 I was off for Khatmandu, arriving at 9:45, after three hours in the air and the sighting of Everest in distant majesty. A Royal Nepalese Airline plane was preparing to take off for New Delhi as we landed. It was Flight 009, that I would take 24 hours later (with luck,

for the RNA had only two planes).

I put up very comfortably at the Annapurna Hotel. Spurning a bus tour, I walked dusty, mostly unpaved streets for several hours. It was good to stretch one's legs after the restraints of Dacca. The air was clear and cold. The people looked poor but hardy, and ~~the~~ beggary was almost non-existent. The houses looked drably substantial after Dacca and very few showed pretensions of wealth. The people seemed Tibetan in their quilted garments, and I noted that coolies here, unlike Pakistan, carried their loads aided by a forehead strap. I returned to the Annapurna rather tired, probably because of the 4423-foot altitude.

Of course I bought a prayer wheel and a stuffed yak.

Then on to New Delhi next day to be met by a Ford driver and taken to the splendid India International Center, which Ford and Rockefeller had built. I had just under two days of business and sightseeing in New Delhi, time well spent thanks to Dr. and Mrs. Vernon Hall who had visited us in Dacca. I saw Qulb Minar, the Red Fort, and drove up Raj Path (where I was pleased to see the statue of George VI still in place) to the Secretariat Buildings and Parliament House.

Off to Hyderabad mid-morning of the 26th, which was India's Republic Day, and the plane swung over Raj Path where we saw a great parade forming, with many elephants.

Arriving at Hyderabad at 11:30, I took a bus and cycle-rickshaw to the hilltop Ritz Hotel, formerly the Nizam's Hillfort Palace. My ground-level room opened off a fine central courtyard and I dined sumptuously to the melodious strains of a six-piece orchestra. I spent the next day at the Regional Research Center, Rajendranagar, guided by Dr. Shastri whom I

had met at I.R.R.I. Hyderabad is an attractive city set among several solid stone hills. The population is 45% Moslem.

On the 28 I flew to Madras and, after a two-hour stop, thence to Calcutta.

The Great Eastern Hotel, Calcutta, was in itself an experience. I judged it to be Victorian with Edwardian and Georgian additions. My room (No. 722) was reached by going up in a lift, down a long corridor, up a stairs, along another corridor, and across a great skylight by a species of catwalk. As we negotiated the latter, the porter said, "Umbrella provided when it rains". The dining room was regal, and the waiters, in white with red turbans and sashes, called me sahib.

Calcutta has some exceedingly fine buildings especially in and near Eden Park: Victoria Memorial, St. Paul's Cathedral and Raj Bhawan (Government House). The statues of all the viceroys (mostly equestrian) are still intact, as is Fort William. I had a real rickshaw puller, named Ghuti Lal, who trotted along tirelessly for hours.

I flew into Bangkok by Qantas 740 on the evening of January 29, finding the temperature 91° F, and putting up at the Asia Hotel at airline expense. After 25 hours, I was off to Manila where two I.R.R.I. men met me and got me to bed at Los Baños next door to "our" old house at 1:30 a.m.

The four-day meeting at I.R.R.I. involved my counterparts from India, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines, all of whom seemed by now to be old friends. There was a great deal of enthusiasm. We were part of something big, potentially the biggest thing yet in increased food production. Some wrinkles to get out, of course. The only shadow was the population explosion; and it was deep and dark, an impending evil.

On Sunday morning, February 5th, I went to Manila by road and Hong Kong by air. With a 27-hour stopover, I took a room at the large new Park Hotel. It was full of "Rest and Recreation" boys from Vietnam. This was my fourth stopover, and Hong Kong proper and Kowloon had become familiar territory, but without losing their utter fascination. Again, I had a long list of articles from family, friends and servants. And again the diaper pins and a top coat of amazing *avoirdupois*.

The Monday night stopover in Bangkok was my fifth and I put up at a fifth hotel, this time the Manohra. This was a very new place, specifically built for the R.R. boys — I couldn't use my electric shaver because the voltage was American 110. And the same brand of beer that sold in Manila for 15 cents was 50 cents at the Manohra bar.

I was back in Dacca on the 7th, to be swamped with accumulated mail and work.

\* \* \*

February 21st was Shahid Day. We had missed last years celebration when student gangs upset or "bounced" all cars not having the license plate numbers converted to Bengali numerals, by means of a temporary paper covering suitably inscribed. This day commemorates martyrs who died in a Bengali-for-State-Language riot in 1952. This year roving gangs of students carrying a black flag tore down or painted over all signs not in Bengali. The gate post lights at Ford Foundation were broken to remove those words. House name plates of foreigners, hardly translatable to Bengali, were painted over. I watched a most remarkable parade that day on Airport Road (English translation). Some two thousand chanting students bearing a great black

banner led it, followed by one thousand soldiers, bayonets fixed. And, bringing up in the rear, two ambulances. Fortunately, the implication of skirmish and casualties never came off.

Eid-ul-Azha (the day of the Haj pilgrimage, which I called Id al Adha in my Syrian account) came on March 21, 1967 (it had been on April 2nd in 1966). For days in advance fattened and high<sup>ly</sup> decorated sacrificial animals (bullocks, cows, goats, sheep) were on display at the racecourse infield and offered for sale at premium prices. The ritualistic slaughter was on Eid morning. From the Savar road I witnessed the sacrifice of two cows at the entrance to a village. I saw spurting blood caught in a large bowl with the spillage lapped up by starving dogs, saw impatient vultures quick to carry off some gory organ — and <sup>r</sup>steak my windshield with red trails, coursing slowly down. The sides of city streets were studded with big blue beef bowels, where vultures wheeled and darted by day and pye dogs fought and yelped by night.

Ahmed, as on all Eids, brought us our lunch. Alim gave us beef, and Eunos goat. Good people all, and our friends. And I remembered a conclusion early arrived at: the problem is not how to endure life in Pakistan, but how to understand it — and possibly to enjoy it.

And so we came to our last day in Dacca. A score of friends came to 103B to offer their help or just to say goodbye. The girls were heartbroken. They knew that the chance was slight that they would ever see their friends again. Alim came to help Ahmet and me with the baggage for checking (150 pounds in seven bags; we were going economy most of the way so as to work in some side trips within the first class fare). We were all at the airport at six. There was a host of friends to see us off, including Dr. and Mrs. Eunos, who had come from Rajshahi, and about 20 of the younger staff from ARI. Elaine's parting with Neil was pathetic. I

found Ahmet, my driver, hardest to leave. We took off for Karachi at seven.

\* \* \*

At Karachi we were met by Bob and Pat Havener, formerly of Ranir Kutl, and entertained at their house before being lodged at Ford Flat.

Then homeward, first stop Teheran. We lodged at the Commodore Hotel, took a tour into the mountains and visited Sepabsalar Mosque, Golestan Palace and the Crown Jewels.

At the airport next morning we paid a \$12.00 Terminal fee and saw in red headlines that there had been a military coup in Athens, our next stop. We had just over an hour in Beirut. I felt very much at home in familiar surroundings, and realized that we had now been around the world.

Athens was also familiar, except for the slit trenches, soldiers and tanks. We put up at the Electra Hotel and spent one day on the Acropolis and another touring the country-side.

Istanbul next, and the Plaza Hotel with a good view of the Bosphorus. And two days to see the Blue Mosque, St. Sophia, Old Seraglio and the Bazaar, and to have a drive into the country, with lunch on the Black Sea.

There followed a day in Vienna, another in Munich, and two in Frankfurt. We did as I think everyone does in those fine old cities, though Frankfurt has emphatically modern areas.

Then London, and our first feeling of being really home. Ten days to visit our old friends in The Byway, Mrs. Russell and Pam at Egham, Geoff and Edith Padwick at Haslemere; to go up to Oxford, and down to Paris on May 4th, Elise's birthday; to shop and read the papers in Canada House.

Then Bermuda. I had to show the family Bermuda, and we stayed at my old lodgings, the Kenwood Club. I still proclaim these islands best.

To New York for seven airport hours (in Kennedy and Newark) because of bad weather, and then Montreal. We stayed with our old friends. Bea and Wally Boyce, and had a day at Expo 67.

Then Ottawa on May 12 and Edmonton on the 18th. All of our old friends at the airport, and Bob and Shirley — and Buster. Home: only that single word, I can add nothing to it!

\* \* \*

Mention has already been made of my being inspired to poetry during a long, moonlit crossing of the lower Ganges. The following is what I put to paper that same night before I went to bed in a Government guest house.

#### REVERIE OF THE RIVER I

I say the River I  
For the river is I.  
(I is a letter; but so is Dee,  
And Dee a river — the River Dee).

I sprang from mountain heights,  
And in my stripling youth  
I lightly leaped and sang  
In the dashing style  
Of young rivers.  
Running headlong  
To level lowlands.

Submerging here my youthful look  
In brimming self-importance,  
I swept into woodlands  
In lordly fashion —  
And found confluence.  
A slender stream in shining curves  
Flowed, a warm flush, out of the south  
And in gentle eddies joined me,  
Our caresses dissolving  
In sparkling ripples.

I slid by distant farms  
 And nearer towns, and came  
 In my prime to the city,  
 From whence I wound in flood away  
 To regain in wide meadows  
 My rusticity.

Thus in living course I flowed  
 Into my maturity,  
 And broadened to meander  
 In portly dignity.  
 Now, sated with placidity,  
 I was prone to reflection,  
 Glancing in memory  
 To the upper reaches  
 Of my utmost youth.

At last, and this my present time,  
 I am in aged estuary,  
 And have tasted the tang of the brine.  
 Behind, the push of flood subsides  
 To leave me sinking in my bed;  
 Before, the hushed, impending hour  
 When I shall pass below the tide  
 Into the deep silence  
 Of the eternal sea.

\* \* \*

On another occasion I made an aerial crossing of Monsoon  
 Asia by day and by night, with inspiration that would not rise to poetry,  
 and which I put into words as a fresh experience in another guest house.

#### JUNGLE FLIGHT

Flight TG (Thai) 304 takes off at 5:40 and Dacca, still hot  
 and humid, recedes westward under the setting sun. We fly east, then  
 south, over the Pakistani patchwork of paddy fields to skirt the offshore  
 islands, denuded of both trees and houses by recent cyclones. Eastward  
 again over the Chittagong Hill Tracts where the Jungles begin. With tropic



suddenness the land is dark, and below are glittering rings of fire. I count five. They are the pre-monsoon fires of the slash-and-burn tribes and each will bring into primitive cultivation a black clearing in the Jungle.

Burma, and in the blackness below an endless Jungle with here and there a campfire. Elephant camps, for on the higher slopes and ridges are the great teak forests. At the campfire in the clearing the Anglo-Burman boss quaffs the first raw ounces of his nightly bottle; the oozies, having hobbled and belled their tuskers, relax in their lungyis and take their fill of rice. And moving outward from the camp, each elephant is crunching the first few succulent pounds of the half-ton he will consume before dawn.

And we above prepare for the descent to Rangoon. An airport like all airports, the ubiquitous souvenir shops, and a salesman's finger directed at a dollar sign in rejection of my rupees. Out on the tarmac again and a glance at the stars. There is the Big Dipper — above the Pole Star here, not below.

Off again, over the leaden expanse of the Martaban Gulf. Then Thailand and its Jungle, all dark except for the elephant camps and occasional villages. Three hundred miles, mostly of Jungle, brings us to Bangkok at ten.

A long ride into town and a room at the Rama (parenthetically a Hilton Hotel).

Morning, and a long wait at the cashier's counter, while two American couples enumerate last night's martinis and Manhattans. I only had three, says a Motherly Old Lady. The second M. O. L. admits, with details, to four. Masculine arguments to the point that the alleged

seventeen were in fact only fourteen. I am permitted to intrude by a harassed employee, and leave wondering if the Hotel will concede that the customer is always right. I don't know. I've never argued with Hilton.

Taxis are hard to get in Bangkok, for the soldiers come here from Saigon for rest and recreation — that means girls, and girls mean taxis. But in due course I am transported to the airport.

Aloft again at 10:10 (Air France 184) to come by 10:30 to Cambodia. Below is (Lake) Tonle Sap and away to the north to Angkor, but it is lost in the Jungle.

Cambodia passes imperceptibly into South Vietnam. There are long smoke trails from three Jungle fires. War in the villages? Or just boondock slash-and-burn agriculture? A scroll-work of broad meandering rivers braced with straight canals means that Saigon is just ahead. Saigon and war. Aircraft in rows, aircraft in high-walled masonry bays. Great rectangular encampments, each with its row on row of shining roofs.

An hour in the airport, where the concourse has been converted into the world's largest beer parlour. It is full of soldiers in green battle dress, sidearms and clumping boots. Grimly aloof are the Vietnamese, small and tough, the women sitting on the floor. I order orange juice, and it comes out of a can. There is a scattering of soldiers in fawn-coloured uniforms. They are part of the four thousand just arrived and they look young and soft among the green-clad veterans. I notice one very young chap; he is boyish, undoubtedly scared, probably homesick. A run across the tarmac, for a sudden shower streaks the sunshine.

Then eastward over the South China Sea, riding the crests of spectacularly vertical cloud formations. Next stop is Manila. And its hinterland, too, is Jungle, Jungle, Jungle.

## NATIONALISM AND THE BRITISH RAJ

The term India relates to the British period. Bombay, Madras and Calcutta were established as fortified trading ports. British interests, commercial and political, spread inward and the princedoms were federated into a single unit of the Empire. When the British left — partition. Why?

The Hindus accepted the British establishment: its policy of law and order, its trade, its language, its canals, railways, institutions. The Moslems did not. Speaking very broadly, the Hindus were loyal subjects, the Moslems rebels.

When the time came to grant native participation in government, the Hindus qualified. They were eager to take civil service examinations and, with proficiency in English, passed them. The Moslems were left out. And when Hindus, under the Crown, became the ruling class, Moslems alleged discrimination.

World War I compounded these difficulties for the Moslems. Turkey, the Ottoman Empire, sultanate of the Faith, was on the side of the enemy. Hindus rose in defence of the British Empire, Moslem sympathy was, on religious grounds, with the Ottoman Caliphate. After the war the Moslems were at a further disadvantage in civil service competitions, for they had relatively few to take advantage of the "soldiers preference" clause.

The Moslem plight was real, *it* would be intolerable in a United India, its solution lay in partition — a separate Islamic state.

Partition, based solely on religious census, must have been made without regard to the consequences. One hears in India and Pakistan of

mass exodus, of massacre of a half million, of bloody riots. One sees economic units dismembered, for example, the agricultural production of 85% of the world's raw jute was in Pakistan, the industrial means of processing and handling was in India. Twenty years later, one country was struggling to develop the excised industry, the other to grow its own raw material.

The British moved out, perhaps not loved, but certainly not hated. I found Calcutta definitely pro-British. This city, British-made, the old Capital, was proud of its parks, museums, libraries, galleries and other splendid reminders of Empire. New Delhi, the new capital, one felt was still British. And even West Pakistanis had a good word for the British Raj "Oh, they exploited us in the beginning. They made a great deal of money. But they sank a lot too, in irrigation canals and uneconomic railways and public institutions. And we parted as friends".

Anti-British feeling was met with, however, in East Pakistan. It was a neglected area, except during Lord Curzon's viceroyship, 1905-1910, when Dacca was made a provincial capital. Curzon Hall, the finest architectural example of the period, remains a tribute to the viceroy.

Coming to the present nationalism, I would say that it finds its most noticable expression among high school and university students, and that it revolves around a movement to replace English by native languages. English is the medium of higher education and, perforce, of the National Assembly, for members from the West rarely speak Bengali, nor those from the East Urdu.

Most of the student riots on the streets and in the Universities of East Pakistan had the object of forcing the Government to adopt Bengali as the official language and the language of higher education. Our car

license plates came out with Bengali numerals, commercial houses changed their signs under threat, the Education ministry offered prices for translation of English textbooks. My friend Dr. Eunos translated a university text in plant anatomy, contrary to copyright, and won a prize of Rs. 10,000. There were perhaps a dozen other translations.

But what of the thousands of scientific journals that come out weekly, monthly and quarterly, in English? To translate one percent of them would be an impossible task. And why? One of the greatest advantages that the Pakistani has, when he seeks to develop his country, is his knowledge of English.

Universities were closed, sometimes for several weeks, in protests over language policies, the Tashkent Agreement, U.S. bombing of North Vietnam, what Vice-President Humphry said, the examination schedule, etc.

In East Pakistan another form of nationalism reared its head — separatism. Their provincials were getting a very low percentage of national appointments, their interests were getting low priority in the enactments of the central government. In Dacca I heard many times the remark, "We got much better treatment under British rule!"

Sometimes I was reminded of those days of Empire. Everytime I mounted the stairs to my office at A.R.I., my eye would catch the marble plaque on the wall of the landing:

To the Memory of a Kindly Man

Kenneth McLean BSc. I.A.S.

Director of Agriculture

Who Died in Dacca 14th January 1937

After Serving in Bengal from 24th October 1914

The Anglo-Indian, the Englishman who devoted his life to public service in India has record of initiative, persistence and excellence that no responsible Pakistani or Indian would deny. The botanical surveys, the soil surveys, the agricultural experiments, the detailed maps, the floras and the faunas attest fully to that.

When I happened to be in the vicinity of the English church adjacent to Victoria Square (still so-called even though it has been proclaimed the Square of the Martyrs), I always entered if at all possible, and not because it was cool on hot days. The memorial wall plaques fascinated me. Here I saw one side of English life in India. The young clerk who in pre-~~M~~<sup>u</sup>tiny days signed on with the East India Company for five years, to have free passage both ways and make a salary unheard of at home. But he died in Bengal in his early twenties. Here a young English wife who never returned home to loved ones. Men by the score who succumbed to disease and pestilence. Children whose ages were pathetic. Two young ~~bro~~thers who died a day apart.

I would leave the church with a full heart and a prayer that my own loved ones would see home again. And reaching the street, teeming with the everlasting poor of Bengal, my heart went out to all humanity.

## CHAPTER 19. IN ESTUARY

I take this title from my poetic impersonation of a river, inspired by the waters of the lower Ganges (and appended to the preceeding chapter).

The current still flows on; but it approaches the end of its surging course, and must shortly lose its force in a broadening estuary — and its freshness in the brine. At this point one remembers that he is mortal. He may dread the impending hour, but the face that he shows to those about him must be a brave one.

I have another analogy and this, too, I identify with the Ganges. Much of the water was deep and still, heavy with inertia. But here and there a current streaked the still waters with youthful energy and forward purpose. And on such a stream I propose to ride, so long as it serves to carry me away from stagnation in the backwaters.

And so, until the ". . . sixth age shifts into the lean and slippered pantaloons . . . "

\* \* \*

When we were established again in our old home, and Bob and Shirley had moved to Vancouver, I found that I had two pent-up propensities. One was to walk in the quiet of the woods along the river bank, antidote to the restraints of Dacca; the other was to build things, to do-it-myself, the reaction to too many servants.

I resurfaced the rear patio, I built a deck over the sunporch and stairs leading to it, coated the roof shingles with 25 gooey gallons, and built a garden shed. With the onset of winter I built two rooms in the basement for Elise and remodeled Bob's for Elaine. And I did more work

than the plumber did in putting in a basement bathroom. Possibly, in this latter, I was motivated by plumber's fees.

The next year, after painting the house, I excavated and concreted two pools in the garden, and upraised a mountain with waterfalls and a brook. This latter emptied, by a fall into the first pool (for lilies) which overflowed into the other (for bathing, 10 1/2 x 13 1/2 feet). The waterfalls were, of course, made possible by a recirculating pump. And when I say excavate, let it be known that it was I, alone, that did the shovelling. The motivation for all this was doubtless a compensation for the sale of Driftwillow and the loss of my handiwork there.

Before leaving the University in 1965, I had terminated, pretty well, my researches into the inheritance of quantitative characters in barley. So upon my return I started projects in population genetics, one on insects, the other on humans. In these undertakings I took advantage of ready-made, natural populations — the interval before retirement was too short for the creation and study of experimental populations.

I also undertook an archaeological study of Indian sites in the Porcupine Hills, west of Stavely and Claresholm. In this I was aware that I had come full circle: the arrowhead hunting of my earliest youth, near the old picnic grounds, was to be continued in my retirement years, changed somewhat in degree of sophistication, but still near the same spot, now called Willow Creek Provincial Park.

This work will involve the tracing of a set of buffalo drive - lines (sunken piles of stones at three-pace intervals) of unusual scope. They appear to enclose a canyon exit and then converge on a cutbank jump some three miles distant. Did our Indians take the first step toward



domestication of the buffalo, containment of the herd? Of course, there will also be excavations of tipi rings, the tracing of effigies — and a search for the site of an old whisky fort, Pinecoulee Post.

There were also innovations in my work at the church. I became involved with a "Drop-In", in which our Ramsey Hall was made available for youth activities, unspecified and almost unrestrained. A report will be attached hereto.

\* \* \*

During this time "on home leave" I was, of course, writing and reading.

My writing rather blossomed, and bore fruit. I finished the biography, Aberhart of Alberta, with Premier Ernest C. Manning reading the final draft and writing the Foreward. Also, I was able to bring to completion a historical novel, scenes of which had been wont to intrude on my imagination ever since my visit to the ruins of Palmyra, back in 1953. With blood, violence and sex shattering its basic serenity, it now emerged as Sodom Thy Sister. It was also a rather productive period for short stories.

Indeed, with all of my carpentry, masonry, plumbing, roofing and painting, writing and new research projects, I was showing a marked acceleration, rather than a graded deceleration, as retirement approached.

This gathering momentum and resultant velocity was quite unintentional. I was reading books on retirement and its concomitant senescence. They all advocated slowing down career work to a point approaching zero at the moment of retirement, with a mild compensatory build-up of

outside interests. I couldn't quite fit myself into that picture.

Especially when, due to recurring Departmental crises at the University, I was drafted into the Chairmanship in my final year.

My other and lesspointed, reading was more helpful.

First there is the wisdom in Swift's Resolutions, made for his own old age 235 years ago:

Not to marry a young Woman

Not to keep young Company unless they really desire it

Not to be peevish, or morose, or suspicious

Not to scorn present Ways, or Wits, or Fashions, or Men, or War

Not to be severe with young People, but give Allowances for their youthfull Follies, and Weaknesses

Not to talk much, nor of myself

Not to be positive or opinionated

Not to set up for Observation all these Rules, for fear that I should observe none.

Then there is the exquisite feeling and imagery of Tennyson:

Sunset and evening star,  
And one clear call for me!  
And may there be no moaning of the bar,  
When I put out to sea . . .

Twilight and evening bell,  
And after that the dark!  
And may there be no sadness of farewell,  
When I embark . . .

Ten years ago on the Isle of Wight I hiked across High Downs to the huge cross that marks the objective of Tennyson's daily walk. And I looked down on splendid cliff and sea, ~~and~~ remembering his lines.

In 1834, <sup>that</sup> most gentle renegade, Cardinal Newman, wrote a prayer which we Senior Citizens might well repeat:

May He support us all the day  
long, till the shades lengthen, and  
the evening comes, and the busy world  
is hushed, and the fever of life is over,  
and our work is done. Then in His  
mercy may He give us a safe lodging,  
and a holy rest, and peace ~~at~~ last.

Swift's tenet of self-discipline, "Not to talk too much, nor of myself," stands for autobiographers as an admonition, a bitter pill to take. But, being unable to desist, I mere<sup>ly</sup> change the subject.

\* \* \*

At the end of an active, far-ranging, professional career, one is expected to philosophize, or at least to outline the principles by which one has lived.

In this regard I must confess to a great simplicity. Indeed, I rather think that most of my philosophy has been given unconsciously in the Driftwillow papers.

In religion, I have looked at the immensities of time and space, and have asked these questions. Are we the product of orderly forces beyond our understanding? Or of some outrageous accident? Without imposing scientific scrutiny I have chosen God. In this I have been sustained by my friends in the church: as a class they are given less to selfishness, less to personal evaluations based on success and possessions, more to brotherhood, than are my other friends.

I have wished for my children three things: that they be healthy in mind and body, that they may attract to themselves good friends, and that they may be able to cope with life. That is asking enough and I thank God for fulfillment.

The most deeply-satisfying and sustaining things in life have been the good men and women that I have known or heard of. From them I have drawn faith, hope, love and happiness.

I believe that one of the great virtues is loyalty, loyalty at all levels. Among my most cherished memories are the loyalties that have come to me — from a Russian Prince, a Canadian janitor, and a Bengali driver.

Unselfishness is another great virtue, and in this I have tried to qualify. Such lapses as I have had has always brought unhappiness.

I have done my best not to harm any man nor any creature, not to strip any man of his dignity, not to scorn those who are poor or outlandish. I have loved my fellow humans for their little vanities and small pretensions — and I hope that I have been able to laugh at my own.

This I think, completes the whole of my philosophy, or whatever it is that a man lives by.

\* \* \*

Now I end my story with retirement four months away. The question poses itself, is there life after retirement?

I have always found life exuberant, full of variety, of opportunities that challenged, something new round every corner. And, when embarking on new ventures, this fullness overflowed. "On such a full sea" am I now afloat.

41

My final few months will see two new books on display in bookstores and these memoirs (ten copies) hidden away in archives and in libraries. There will also be some short pieces, scientific and fictional.

Our house has been sold and another bought. The latter, on four well-treed acres with 200 feet <sup>of</sup> seafront on Mill Bay, Vancouver Island, will be extensively renovated (yes, I shall wield the hammer and the saw). The seafront will mean more than a view and a rolling surf, more even than having our own sea creatures on the beach, for son Bob and I will build boats and need convenient launching and moorage. See us for ketches that will take you round the world, or for houseboats should you choose the many channels and sheltered bays of the Gulf Islands.

Of course, I must also find time for the Porcupine Hills, its ancient Indian sites and friends almost as old. The University, also, will draw me back, for there I have sentimental attachments, and for some years to come the campus will yield an old friend at almost every turning.

I worry a little about my wild birds. Will the new owner of our house take over my feeding station, which has not failed them in twenty years?

In moments of reverie, I remember. That moving point in my life called now, stops and turns back — and, again, the past is now. The good old days! I savor their simplicity, relive an elemental existence in an age that is gone.

Back in the present, I wonder. Do I delude myself with the enchantment of years gone by? Are we indeed finding truer values, evolving a better life? But I see youth rejecting our spiritual heritage, and yet renouncing materialism. I see love and marriage marred, family life flouted. I see the proprieties, the refinements of human behavior, reduced to the level of biological urges.

I hold no brief for prudery, but I do stand firm for old-fashioned decency in human relationships.

Finally, one wonders if he has found happiness in life. But one doesn't search for it; it just comes — when you deserve it. And I suppose I've had my fair share. I have some thoughts about happiness, and with these I shall end my story.

To be happy is a duty that you owe, as a living person, to yourself and to your fellowman. And there are four ingredients in happiness—four Somethings:

Something to do,  
Something to love,  
Something to share,  
Something to hope for.

There may be something else that makes for happiness; but I haven't met with it, nor can I think of what it could possibly be.

\* \* \*

I have already promised, or threatened, an account of our Drop-In center at Garneau United Church. And here it is.

#### THE OPEN DOOR AND WHO CAME IN

It all started with those of our youth who watched the world go by with utter indifference. They sat, unwashed and unshod, at the corner of Jasper and 102nd, or at The Bay. Sat in their hundreds. It was August, 1968. The Middle Earth experiment at All Saints Cathedral had folded, the proposed City youth center, in the nature of things, couldn't find a place for its kind of operation.

On September 5th we met jointly with St. George's Anglican to talk about Sunday School and Mid-Week programs, but before we knew what happened we were planning the Drop-In. Give these kids a place of their own, get to know them, help them to get straightened-out. Straightened into straights (the ones with short hair, ordinary clothes and jobs — or school), started along the right path to proper goals. On our part, a legitimate Christian objective.

We opened the doors of Ramsey Hall on May 10th. Miss Ev Battell, experienced social worker and half-hippy herself, was immediately in charge. The rest of us lurked behind the scene, mainly Reverend Vern Wishart and Professor (of theology) Charlie Johnston. Assorted youth came first in a trickle, then in a flood: sitters from Jasper Avenue, runaways from nearby towns, drifters from across the continent. And not a straight among them. Pot Heads (those for whom marijuana is a regular and important aspect of life) mostly, kids just trying to be "in it", draft dodgers, parolees, couples living common law. Ev was accepted immediately, a bit straight but hip — almost a chick. Vern, after five years in India, was soon with it, breaking the maxim, "Never trust anyone over thirty". Poor Charlie, a bachelor and rather timid around women, admitted to being plain scared. But he hovered persistently around the periphery of the scene and came eventually to be accepted as cool, man, cool. "Doc has hair all over him," said one of our regulars. And that's the acme of hip-cat approbation!

Ramsey Hall was transformed. The decorations were way out (out of sight): pictures, slogans, designs, a low net ceiling. Candlelight and incense, the awful blaring sounds of a jam (band) session (Charlie's hearing was impaired). The inmates dancing in the gloom, bushy headed cats in tatters contorting barefoot with sleek-headed chicks also in tatters. An aimless

zombie wandering about, mindless from drugs. A couple of cats stretched out on the kitchen counters, snoring. Perhaps, in a corner, a group is trying to bring down a freaker.

They came to the Drop-In to freak out, or to confess to overdoses of sleeping pills. Here goes Vern dragging a pathetic child to the nearby hospital and its stomach pump. And here poor Charlie rushing along the same route with his arms full of a kicking screaming chick, who was freaking out and in desperate need of antidote.

Quieter moments of consultation. The Heads liked to rap (talk) with straights, cool ones that didn't hassle their minds. Some of course, were desperately in need of professional help. For these we arranged a plug-in (information and referral center) at Knox Youth Center. Twenty-four hour emergency telephone service. Medical and legal aid, drug emergencies, runaway and suicide counselling, job opportunities — all at the other end of the line.

Drifters always looked up the local hippie hollows, old houses used for cooking and sardine sleeping. By mid-summer they were forced to look to us for a pad (bed) — even by close-packing extra sardines couldn't be squeezed in. We arranged for a crash pad (overnight sleeping) at Metropolitan Church. Private homes also provided for over 400 bed-nights — mostly girls.

Many case histories were interesting, and many with gratifying results. But I shall confine myself to general remarks on a few individuals. The most useful was an American draft dodger and reformed drug addict. The most enthusiastic was a boy on parole, who forgot to report and was most appreciative of our efforts on his behalf in court, which were unfortunately futile. The most interesting was the boy and girl who lived together, common-law.



This couple came to church one morning, outlandishly dressed. He had managed to borrow sandals, but she was barefoot. After the service, several of our congregation, especially old ladies, welcomed them to our midst. That afternoon Vern found the boy giving an impassioned account of this happening to a large circle of our regulars. The main point was that they had been accepted. Shortly after this Charlie suggested that the couple consider Christian marriage. They considered it for two weeks, quarreling for the whole time. Then they gave up the idea, and were a loving couple again.

We got no support from the Government nor the City. Help in various forms came from United, Anglican, Presbyterian, Catholic, Baptist and Moravian churches, and from the Y.M.C.A.

The Drop-In continued during the winter as a smaller group, The Electric Blanket, and re-opened in May 1970 in the dual form of "Quiet Place" and "Crisis Center".

The assessment can hardly be a glowing one. There was little in the way of creative work, the rap sessions resolved nothing, the establishment was generally damned but nothing even vaguely suggesting an alternative was ever proposed. For ourselves, the straights, we had provided a meeting place, and facilities for recreation, refreshment and counselling. Many hundreds did drop-in, and the man-days of use ran into many thousands.

This has been a strange appendage to my story, and I thank God that it has reflected only a small segment of modern youth. My hope for the future lies largely in those that shunned our open door.

I went home, to the old homestead, recently, and found neglect and disuse everywhere. My brother, Howard, used the house occasionally; but it seem<sup>ed</sup><sub>Λ</sub> entirely empty, lifeless. When I cam<sup>e</sup><sub>Λ</sub> away, I wrote the story that follows. It is not really true, much is imagined, perhaps with tortured imagination. But I believe I wrote as an artist, expressing my feelings in something not quite real; but, oh, so true!

#### THE HOUSE THAT WAS DEAD

I stopped the car and got out to open the barbed-wire gate. But the wire loop, that through the years had smoothed and polished the top of the gatepost, was secured by a rusted staple. For a moment I looked at the western backdrop of tawny foothills, feeling again their spell of mystery and desolation. Then I pressed down one of the barbed strands and stepped through the gate.

I looked at the house, my birthplace and boyhood home. It was to be torn down next week, worth only the trouble of breaking it up.

I walked towards the house, my thoughts following my feet across dry drab gravelly ground. Could this be the field where as a boy I had walked barefoot in the cool damp furrow? Where I had watched the shining slice come from the moldboard to crumple and flatten-out, adding its narrow ribbon to the black expanse of ploughing?

Suddenly the thought struck me: then, the field had been young. Friable and black and rich, as its furrow had shown. Then, too, my Father had been young. Black-haired and vigorous. Now the field was old, decrepit. It reminded me of my Father as <sup>an</sup><sub>Λ</sub> old man. Grey and lined, with crooked <sup>k</sup><sub>Λ</sub> nobby hands . . .

I approached the yard, that piece of ground around the house.

I came to where the gate had been, the opening in the caragana hedge. Opening? Openings everywhere. Only here and there a stunted bush. And this had been my Father's close-clipped pride of solid green! The front yard had been taken over by a coppice forest from the suckering lilac, and by lesser weeds and tufts of grass, all dry and dusty.

The back would be better: Mother's garden. I went round the south side of the house under the poplar, which had long since died, died standing and still stood. Mother's garden! Tumbling mustard! A solid cover, except for the rubbish heap. That was crowned by the old oil stove. My Mother had use<sup>d</sup> it in the heat of summer, of summers long ago. But the blue enamel on the front was still bright. I stroked the smooth enamel absently, thinking of other fingers . . . At the edge of the rubble there were some volunteer parsnips and a few pallid stalks of rhubarb. The last of the verdant race that had populated Mother's garden!

The back door was boarded up, so I went round to the front. There I untwisted the rusty baling wire that bound the doorknob to a nail in the jamb. Inside, a breath of hot stuffy air that smelled of dust and dry-rot, and of the mustiness of old rags and paper.

This was the parlor. And here, grimy now, the white ceiling and light-colored walls, colors my Mother had always insisted upon. Suddenly I knew why. Why the light colors. It was to compensate for the low ceiling and small windows. It was as though my Mother had spoken to me.

Then upstairs to the room where I had been born. A bare room, except for the litter of trash on the floor. Bare even to its bones, for a part of the ceiling was gone exposing its skelton rafters. A dead room. And in this place of my birth, I thought of life and death.

Next to the kitchen, which had always been the most important room. The same litter, with only a dead gopher to distinguish it; but a different smell, as of fried fats with a tang of musk. Bare, too, except for the range. Still intact, even to all of its six lids. And still, I thought, the altar of my Mother's offerings. Her sacrifices and her triumphs. Ah, there is the very wood box that as a boy it had been my job to fill. Still kindling in it! What usurper had done this final filling? Well I, myself, will have the honor of the final domestic act. There the kindling, there the paper (paper everywhere), and here the match!

I lit the last fire in the old stove. It drew well enough, too. Hardly any smoke.

Picking up the dead gopher, all dry and light, I imagined the fragile skelton within. This, the last occupant of the old house. Had it got in by the open door and later, trying to leave, had found it closed? Well, look here, tiny scratches on the bottom of the door! Poor little beggar. Well at least you will have a decent burial.

I carried the wafer-like corpse outside and buried it under the poplar. Where I buried my dog, Joe Beak, of fondest memory, many years before. The poplar had been alive then, shading the house from the summer sun. Now its stark branches reached into the sky, anguish, it seemed, in every limb.

I went back to the door, but I didn't go in. The house was dead, as dead as the gopher and the tree. Dead things, like the house and the tree, should not stand dismal and decrepit, rotting away. They should be returned to the earth, like the gopher.

I walked slowly towards the car. At the gate I looked back at the old house. It was in flames!

I ran back, and watched it burn to the ground. Everything burned: the poplar, the hedge, the weeds.

Hours later I ran some of the ashes through my fingers. Cremation, I thought, the chastity of fire. Ashes are the decent end for a house that was dead.





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